

Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Officeholding, c.1300-c.1600

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Abstract:

Recent revisionist scholarship has challenged the view that the relationship between lords and tenants in late medieval England was inherently conflictual. However the consequences of this revisionism for the position of manorial officials, individuals drawn from a lord's tenants to help run his manor, have not yet been fully considered. Using the surviving court rolls of three case-study manors, this article demonstrates that tenants were invested in an effectively functioning system of officers, which met their needs in the manor court. This led them to police both officials and the wider community independently of seigneurial pressure to ensure officers performed their work correctly. This 'positive' attitude of tenants towards manorial officeholding in turn has greater ramifications in explaining the persistence of manorial structures into the sixteenth century and implying that the exercise of manorial lordship was as much collaborative as conflictual.

Text:

The relationship between lords and tenants has long been a central theme in the economic and social history of late medieval England. The traditional view, often associated with a Marxist historiography, argues that this relationship, particularly as far as it concerns unfree tenants, was fundamentally exploitative due to a process of 'surplus extraction' by which lords through coercion sought to expropriate the wealth and labour of peasant households.¹ Manorial structures and especially the manorial court, are seen as the key instruments by which the lord controlled his tenants and thus achieved this extraction.² Whilst acknowledging some successful resistance, Ralph Evans notes that at Thorncroft 'the manorial court...consistently secured eventual compliance' to the desires of the lord.³

Within this model the role of manorial officials is of prime importance. Officials provided the personnel necessary to run manors, and therefore to enforce seigneurial policies on the ground. Whilst the actual suite of officers, as well as the roles they performed, varied greatly between different manors they could include reeves, who managed the lord's directly-held demesne land, beables or messors who enforced the decisions of the manorial court, and presentment jurors who reported offences to the court.⁴ Manor courts which also held leet sessions, a franchise allowing lords to police aspects of the royal law such as petty violence and the assize of bread and ale, additionally had leet jurors or capital pledges, who presented these offences, and constables who enforced the peace within the leet. Whilst such roles were technically to keep the King's peace, the lord's franchise meant these officials allowed him to collect the amercements paid by offenders, meaning that they still served a seigneurial purpose.⁵

In this framework, the position of officials is fundamentally conditioned by the relationship of tenants to both their lord and manorial structures. Officials were an essential element in making the profits of lordship possible. At the same time, they would bear the brunt of discontent with seigneurial policies, being both immediately accessible and worse protected than lords. This point is significant due to the method by which offices were filled on many manors. Whilst some lords used hired officials called bailiffs, many instead relied on individuals chosen from among their own tenants, who were obligated to serve due to their tenure.⁶ More important tenant-officials were sometimes rewarded by rent-remittances, but they were not professionals, often serving for short periods of time before being discharged as other individuals were selected to serve in the same office.⁷ Reeves could be held personally responsible for any shortfalls in their accounts, and therefore had to secure the cooperation of their fellow tenants in paying amercements and rents.⁸ The fact that officials had to live among the tenants, and were typically unfree tenants themselves, reveals a potential conflict of interest between serving the lord efficiently and maintaining positive relations with the community of tenants.⁹

The pressures underlying this conflict were linked to the changing nature of lordship, which was in turn linked to demographic changes. This leads to three stages in the position of manorial officeholding. The first stage, conditioned by the high population and direct demesne management of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, saw officers in a relatively positive position. David Stone has suggested reeves were competent managers and able to meet seigneurial expectations.¹⁰ Officers also benefitted from the opportunity to cream off significant perquisites for themselves, as is vividly revealed by the formulary of Robert le Carpenter, which details methods which allowed officials to utilise their position for illicit profit.¹¹ This meant serving in office was at least a manageable burden and may have provided opportunities for enrichment, despite lords' attempts to prevent fraud.

However, in the second stage, the population collapse caused by the Black Death is seen to have reversed this picture. Lords attempted to maintain revenues in the face of falling prices and rising wages, engaging in a process of 'Feudal Reaction'.¹² This meant that reeves came under increased pressure to keep estates profitable whilst officials were required to enforce aspects of serfdom, including labour services designed to replace expensive waged labour, in a time when a reduced population meant it was easier to resist servile obligations.¹³ Officers and officeholding became subject to attack from their fellow tenants, with Peter Larson detailing a litany of assaults on officers and refusals to serve as officials on manors held by the Bishop of Durham.¹⁴ In such straitened times, the officeholding system looks to have been increasingly undesirable for those serving, especially as the post-Black Death world offered opportunities for skilled agriculturalists beyond their home manor.¹⁵

Finally, in the third stage, the impact of successive plagues in the fifteenth century led to a restructuring of the manorial economy and in turn a diminishment in the importance of office. Sustained low grain prices and high labour costs triggered a shift in seigneurial policy from direct management to the leasing of agricultural land, meaning that lords sought less control over their tenants through courts and officers.¹⁶ Simultaneously, serfdom declined and then disappeared across England, meaning that manor courts were no longer required to monitor personal unfreedom.¹⁷ These changes have led to the view that manor courts, and thus manorial officeholding, fell into terminal decline by the sixteenth century, especially with the rise of the parish as an alternative structure of village government from the fifteenth century onwards.¹⁸

The impression of tenants' attitudes to manorial officeholding given in this traditional schema is largely located on their role in mediating the lord-tenant relationship. Officers had to tread a difficult line between the desires of the lord and their fellow villagers. By the same token they could variously ally with either side in order to further their own ends and utilise office to improve their standing, perhaps giving them a measure of control over their fellow tenants.¹⁹ They could alternatively seek to lessen the burdens on their fellows through overlooking non-performance of labour services and concealing heriots.²⁰ This approach is sensitive to flexibility in attitudes to office, suggesting that officeholding was not always a system used entirely to subjugate a tenantry nor entirely used by tenants to meet their own needs. However, it adopts a model of a continuum with the lord's desires at one end and the tenants' desires at the other. Interpretations typically explore the role of reeves and beadles in collecting rents, entry fines and servile dues, and organising works on the demesne: actions designed to extract cash and labour from the tenants to benefit the lord. It was through not exercising such elements of extraction, typically via concealment, that officers could side with their fellow tenants.²¹ Whilst in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth officials were able to manage this balance, their position became untenable after the Black Death as officials became trapped in a vice between lord exerting power from above, and the community of tenants, exerting power from below. In turn, as lords increasingly abandoned direct management and controlling their unfree tenants, officeholding itself withered away with this decay of lordship, suggesting officials largely served seigneurial purposes.

This article seeks to take a different approach to officeholding which is informed by both a revisionist approach to the relations between lord and tenants, and innovations in the understanding of who benefitted from manorial structures. For the period before demographic decline, John Hatcher and Junichi Kanzaka have argued that rents fixed by custom meant that villein tenants were at an advantage as opposed to freemen in the land-hungry pre-Plague era.²² Similarly, depressed wages incentivised lords to commute the labour services of unfree tenants for cash that could be used to pay better motivated waged labour to work their lands.²³ For the period after the Black Death, Mark Bailey has found little evidence for a 'feudal reaction' which was hampered by the inability of lords to

compel tenants to return if they fled the manor. Lords instead quickly dropped aspects of personal unfreedom such as marriage fines and converted servile tenures into new forms of heritable holdings and leaseholds.²⁴

Several historians have also re-evaluated manorial structures, revealing their utility for tenants as well as for enforcing lordship. They have emphasised that even before the Plague courts facilitated *intervivos* land transfers which allowed tenants to participate in fluid land markets and deathbed transfers which allowed tenants to fashion inheritance strategies.²⁵ The court's role as a forum for interpersonal litigation allowed tenants to enter into enforceable credit relationships.²⁶ This position has been further extended in studies examining manorial courts in the early modern period. These have argued that manorial structures played an important role in village life even after the waning of their use as an instrument of seigneurial control in the fifteenth century. This was due to their ability to regulate village communities independently of lordship. Marjorie McIntosh has emphasised the role of manor courts in 'controlling misbehaviour', revealing how villagers from the late fourteenth century onwards took their own initiative in policing their neighbours via court leets, prefiguring national trends in the late sixteenth century.²⁷ Other studies have noted that manor courts remained important for commons' management as a forum to make and enforce bylaws.²⁸ Brodie Waddell has taken a long view of manor courts, arguing that they remained important up to the mid-nineteenth century. He has emphasised that the flexibility of the courts made this possible, through a shift from policing crime and disorder to maintaining the fabric of the manor through bylaws and orders to repair hedges and ditches.²⁹

How does this more positive view of lord-tenant relations and the long-term utility of manorial structures for tenants affect the model of manorial officeholding as mainly seigneurially-driven outlined above? Here, it is argued that is necessary to ask what evidence there is for tenants actually being invested in a well-functioning system of officers. This questions the notion of officeholding as purely, or even mainly, a seigneurial obligation, arguing instead that tenants, at least collectively, had a positive 'attitude' towards manorial office. In exploring this, the scope of officials examined is broadened beyond that typical of studies in the pre-existing literature, including jurors and capital pledges alongside demesne-management positions such as reeves and beadles and thus encompasses all officials at these manors who were chosen from among the lord's tenants. In this way a more holistic view of the manorial officeholding system can be achieved. The time-frame adopted also extends beyond the traditional close of the late middle ages, ending in 1600. This is to see whether there is evidence of tenants' engagement with office beyond the traditional narrative of decline in the fifteenth century in accordance with recent interest by early modernists in manor courts.

The evidence here used to examine attitudes consists of entries concerning officials made in the surviving court rolls of three manors for the period c.1300 to c.1600.³⁰ These are Little Downham

(Cambs.), Horstead (Norf.) and Worfield (Salop.). The entries fall into three categories: those detailing official failure or illicit behaviour, those detailing officials resisting the lord, and those detailing offences made against officials. Using this qualitative evidence is challenging. All entries reveal a deviation from a 'normal' standard of behaviour, and thus represent exceptional rather than typical evidence that is hard to evaluate. This concern is in part alleviated by the evidence collection process. Rather than cherry-picking evidence from a large number of manors, three case studies were chosen and then every surviving roll consulted, meaning that the selected incidents represent a known sample of all entries surviving for these manors. A more fundamental frustration is the terse nature of court rolls, which contain Latin summaries of more complex events that took place both inside and outside court sessions. These examples can therefore only offer snapshots onto 'real' events, and motive must nearly always be imputed rather than directly read.

All three manors held courts leet, but had different sets of officials. Downham, held by the Bishop of Ely, had a reeve, a messor, capital pledges, a jury and a constable. However, for a brief period between 1444 and 1471 the reeve and messor were replaced by a salaried bailiff. Worfield, held by the Lords of Abergavenny, had a reeve, beadle, jurors leet, a jury and a constable. Horstead, held by the crown and then King's College Cambridge, had capital pledges, a jury and a constable, with a salaried bailiff representing the lords' interests. Barring the bailiffs, all these officials were chosen from among the lord's tenants, typically being put forward by the community. Whilst space does not permit extensive comparative discussion of how these different configurations of officeholding systems might have affected attitudes, the diversity reveals that the arguments made here are appropriate for more than one sort of manor.

Three aspects of attitudes are examined. Firstly, it is argued that the reporting of corruption in office by tenants and other officials reveals that tenants wanted at least some aspects of officers' work to be performed correctly, and that these often concurred with the desires of the lord. Secondly, it is shown how a tenant-officer system allowed tenants to defend themselves against aspects of seigneurial administration, in a way that would be far harder if they did not actively have a role in the running of the manor. Thirdly, the perspective is shifted by exploring the offences made against officials by their fellow tenants, and the way these were punished. This further reveals the commitment by at least some tenants to a well-functioning officeholding system, showing how they worked to prevent protests against the authority of officers.

I

The evidence of estate literature reveals that lords were concerned about the losses caused by illicit behaviour in office, and sought to minimise this as much as possible.³¹ However, monitoring corruption was not a straightforward task for lords often not resident on their manors. Whilst audited accounts and the supervision of the steward provided some form of monitoring, lords also relied on

accusations which emanated from the tenants resident on a manor. These came in the form of presentments made by manorial juries or more general inquests to the whole homage, in response to charges posed by the steward.³² However, the question of incentives is paramount here. If an illicit profit affected the lord alone, why would the tenants choose to present it?

Partially this must have been due to fear of being punished for concealment if corruption was made known to the steward.³³ As is outlined below, officials and tenants at the case-study manors were presented for failing to disclose information, although none of this was directly related to official corruption. Another key aspect of coercion was the fact that officials could be made liable for each other's failings and corruption in their accounts, creating an incentive for reporting. This both affected individuals serving successively in the same role, as well as different officers who worked in tandem. An example of the former is seen in a Worfield session of c.1393.³⁴ The jury made a series of presentments concerning Thomas de Rugge, a former reeve who had ended his service in 1392.³⁵ These stated that Rugge had not delivered the profit of two horses and 26s. 6d. in money forfeited by a felon, failed to pay 46s. 8d. of rent from the leasing of a mill and only supplied part of the value of a heriot and stray. The fact that Rugge only had to supply the balance of the account, with no additional punishment, suggests that this was not outright corruption but rather not yet fully accounting for the year. However, more intriguing is that these charges were specifically made because Thomas was charged in the account of Roger Broke, his successor as reeve. This would seem evidence of Broke's need to monitor Rugge's actions in office to avoid being made liable for any financial discrepancies.³⁶

Chains of responsibility also incentivised officers to monitor the behaviour of their fellows.³⁷ In 1416, William Gerbod complained that when he had been reeve three years earlier Henry Barker had served under him as beadle 'to levy and collect rents, fines, amercements and services as was customary'. However, whilst William had 'repeatedly requested the aforesaid Henry to account with him', he had 'always refused to do this', making William liable for the money Henry owed. Henry came to defend himself, and the court ordered that the two men account to two auditors assigned by the steward.³⁸ Whilst unfortunately the resolution of this case is not stated, it reveals how the lord's accounting system made senior officials responsible for the behaviour of subordinate officials, and that disagreements could actually lead the former to seek more seigniorial oversight of their roles.³⁹ A less explicit case is seen in 1412 at Downham, where the messor was amerced 40d. for refusing to sow the lord's seeds when he was required to by the reeve, meaning the latter had to utilise hired labour instead. Plausibly, in this instance the jury presented the case to ensure the reeve was not punished for his subordinate's failures.⁴⁰

Beyond these coercive pressures on officials to report misbehaviour, one can find hints of juries and the wider homage presenting illicit profits of officials as a form of control over individual officers. As Chris Briggs has demonstrated, the monitoring role of tenants was far from neutral, and tenants could

choose to make more presentments against officials they found objectionable.⁴¹ In a detailed set of presentments of 1316, the Downham jury outlined a series of illicit profits made by William Personn as reeve, totalling 25s. 10d. in damage to the lord.⁴² These mainly involved utilising the lord's resources for his own ends, including using the lord's workhorses, cart, and *famuli* to carry his crops and sedge, pasturing his beasts on the lord's land, and taking the lord's timber. The jury's accusations even extended to failure to perform tasks, with them stating 'that the plough-team of the lord laid idle through three successive weeks in Summer and Autumn'. However, the steward stated this was due to work required for the bishop's kitchen and did not cause loss to the lord. Why the jury chose to present such a comprehensive list of abuses against Personn cannot be established for certain, although an intriguing possibility is provided by a presentment in the same list stating that Personn had committed adultery with the wife of Robert Maurice. Was this violation of a moral norm behind the presentment? One of the cases Briggs identified for nearby Landbeach concerned John Frer sending peat turves to his 'concubine', a remarkably similar situation, although as Frer was a salaried outsider attributing a 'moral' explanation is more tenuous.⁴³ Furthermore, Maurice's wife was mentioned separately in a later presentment, when it was stated that Personn had allowed her servants to forage in the manor's fen. Thus, it was perhaps as much that Personn had allowed his mistress to benefit from illicit profits, rather than his taking of illicit profits himself, which had angered the wider officeholding community. This argument could potentially be extended to Frer.

However, beyond cases of presentment of illicit profits as an indirect punishment for other transgressions, a significant incentive for officials, and tenants more generally, to monitor the behaviour of officers is that roles performed incorrectly could also negatively impact tenants. In a landscape where seigneurial and tenants' land lay intermingled, poor management of the former could negatively impact the latter.⁴⁴ At Downham, reeves were presented for mismanaging seigneurial livestock which led to damage in the tenant's crops and failing to scour ditches and maintain watercourses leading to the flooding of common roads.⁴⁵

The detailed case of Thomas Jenkins reveals how concerns about corruption could affect both lord and tenants, leading the jury to be incentivised to report abuse in office. Jenkins served as reeve 1402-4, but concerns about his conduct emerged in the following year. In July 1405, the jury presented that Jenkins should respond for 2s. he received for selling escheated pigs, although this entry gives no suggestion of dishonesty. More importantly, in the same session men who had acted as mainpernors of the farmer of the lord's mill paid for an inquisition into Jenkins. They had been 'greatly damaged' by the fact that this farmer had unexpectedly fled out of the region and asked if Jenkins 'did in any way...help and counsel in contriving the withdrawal' of the farmer. The inquisition returned a negative verdict, as they 'could not find that [Thomas] had awareness of the withdrawal of the...farmer nor was counsel to the same party'.⁴⁶

The following session saw an inquisition to examine Jenkins' management of 'divers heriots, escheats and strays...valued by the [jury]' which had come to the reeve 'in the time of the pestilence...as is put in the record of the court rolls' but in his account had only rendered 3s 1d. of profit to the lord.⁴⁷ Following sessions saw this suspicion confirmed, but also other forms of systematic fraud.⁴⁸ This concerned land transfers. Jenkins, whilst he was 'guard of the...rolls of the courts under the seal of...the clerk of the lord' had 'fraudulently and deceitfully without the notice of the steward [and clerk] unsealed the same and to enrich himself...took the rolls of the court held...11 October [1402] after...the auditing of the account'. He then recorded an *intervivos* transfer with a fine of 3s., 'although...the steward and clerk...exist completely in ignorance [of the transfer]' and 'of the aforesaid fine nothing was given to the lord'. Jenkins had committed the same fraud with another land transfer as well as an amercement levied for a hue and cry raised against him as reeve. The implication of the fraud is that Jenkins had used the role of reeves at Worfield, in whose presence all valid extra-curial transfers of land had to be made unless on a tenant's deathbed, to claim legitimate transfers and take the recorded fines.⁴⁹ He had then concealed these transfers from the following court session and in his account, before returning to the roll for the previous session and adding an entry about the transfer to cover up the fraud.

This case demonstrates the way a rogue official could be problematic for both lord and tenants alike. Clearly, corruption concerning underpayment of seigneurial dues such as escheats, heriots and strays was largely a problem for the lord. However, embezzling fines for land transfers through doctoring records was a concern for both lord and those making the transfer, whilst the former was similarly financially defrauded, the latter's land transfer was not officially recorded and hence not valid. It seems unlikely that the tenants involved in the transfer were complicit in the deception as there is no obvious reason why they would want their fine to go to Jenkins rather than the lord. The earlier concern over the miller, if unfounded, reveals a similar phenomenon. Whilst the miller leaving at the reeve's behest would be a problem for the lord left without the miller, the system of economic ties provided by mainpernors, who presumably had agreed to swear for the miller in exchange for a fee or other financial incentive, shows how again concerns of lord and tenants' over official misbehaviour could be connected.

Outside of the lord's direct concern, officials were often punished for failure to perform activities rather than being overzealous in failing to help tenants prosecute interpersonal cases, showing how tenants and communities utilised the system of officials. At Worfield and Downham c.1400, reeves, beadles, and messors were amerced for failing to attach and distrain tenants to respond to civil pleas, showing how tenants relied on efficient officials to maintain an effective local legal system.⁵⁰ In 1418, Worfield's beadle was placed under pain of 40d. to levy the money owed in several interpersonal complaints.⁵¹ Sometimes, individuals even brought interpersonal suits against officials for failure to perform tasks. In 1324, Clement the Brewer complained that John le Eyr 'who was chosen in public

as messor through the assent of all the community of Downham to guard the crops in the fields' had allowed animals of several tenants to consume half of an acre of his peas to damage of 40*d*. The case ended with the parties being granted licence to agree and John placing himself in mercy.⁵² A similar attempt was made at Worfield in 1353, when Thomas Eche brought a trespass plea against William Bullock, alleging that when the latter was reeve he had failed to levy 10*s*. owed to Thomas by William de Ewyke which he had recuperated in court in the presence of the steward, and demanding 2*s*. in damages for this failure. Bullock's response was that due to Ewyke's 'destruction' he had exercised clemency and had accounted this previously, a response that led to Thomas being amerced.⁵³

Beyond the need for effective officials to meet the requirements of individuals as litigants and conveyers of land, officials needed to meet standards of behaviour in order for them to effectively govern the manor for communal purposes. This is particularly evident for jurors and at all manors there were presentments against individuals for failure to fulfil the expectations of this office. Thomas Rugge was amerced 2*s*. in 1396 at Worfield 'for doing contempt in court and concealing a certain presentment' as a juror, significantly more than the 8*d*. Thomas Jenkins had to pay for advising this action.⁵⁴ Beyond preventing simple corruption, a key aim was to keep both the deliberations of juries and dissension between officials private, presumably in order not to damage the reputation of the jury and the authority of their decisions. In 1411, John Veyse 'after he was sworn into the jury...was ordered that he conceal their deliberations...but revealed these deliberations openly'. Veyse then said all the jurors were false, and was amerced 6*d*.⁵⁵ Similarly, in 1455, John Buxham was amerced 3*d*. for not only withdrawing from his fellow jurors and refusing to come to render his verdict, but also exposing the deliberations of his fellow jurors.⁵⁶ At Horstead, in 1429, John Reve, a capital pledge, was amerced 3*s*. 4*d*. for disputing 'openly in full court the decision of his fellows in the last leet in contempt of court and as a malicious example to others'.⁵⁷

A close reading of the types of official failure reported in court rolls reveals that the coercive systems created by lords to incentivise informing were only part of the reason why such reports were made. Communities of tenants were heavily dependent on efficient officeholders, who did not enrich themselves in ways that perverted land transactions and were diligent in enforcing aspects of interpersonal suits. Jurors that maintained the authority of their office were vital if this organ was to be used to govern the community for communal purposes, especially as their presentments served to monitor the actions of all other manorial officials.

II

As well as fulfilling roles beneficial to the community, leading to an investment in monitoring their performance, officials could also be important in protecting the tenants from aspects of the seigneurial administration. Resistance was sometimes illicit, with juries concealing presentments concerning

seigneurial rights. For instance, at Horstead in 1439 and Worfield in 1485 the jury failed to present marriages of unfree women without licence, even though they typically did present *merchet* dues.⁵⁸ Plausibly this is the tip of a larger iceberg of successfully concealed marriage fines, suggesting that juries exercised discretion in making presentments concerning servile incidents. At Downham in 1332 and 1404, the messor also concealed presentments, although it is not clear for what reason.⁵⁹ In 1408, the jurors for Coltishall, a separate fee held as part of Horstead manor, ‘concealed and would not present’ both that William Ode had damaged the lord’s pastures and reed beds next to Horstead mill and that two men had stolen fish from the nets of the miller of Horstead, for which they were together amerced 26s. 8d.⁶⁰ The reasons for this concealment are not made explicit but potentially could be due to tensions with the miller, with the whole homage of Coltishall being amerced in 1402 for failing to present men of Coltishall who had damaged the mill.⁶¹

Other forms of resistance were more active than concealment. An intriguing example can be seen at Downham in an order to seize the lands of Thomas Overyng, a former reeve, in 1571. This action was justified by both Thomas’ failure to surrender his rent and because he was negligent in performing his office, both standard reasons for seizure. However, a third reason given was that Thomas ‘alleged in full court that the lord would not allocate in his account to the tenants of the manor for their transport services in great insult to the lord and in an evil example to others’.⁶² It is impossible to know whether there was any truth in Thomas’ allegation that the lord was presumably not going to record payments made in lieu of labour services. Certainly, there is no indication in the surviving rolls of connected discontent over labour services, which still appear to have been owed in payments or actual labour at Downham by this point. However, the outburst does reveal the role reeves could potentially take, through their work in managing the lord’s estate and compiling its accounts, in ensuring that tenants were treated customarily by the seigneurial regime and reporting perceived abuses. Thomas was not apparently adversely affected in the longer term by his protest, continuing to appear as a juror down to 1578.⁶³ A variation on this theme can be seen at Worfield, when in 1528 the jury claimed that when William Guldon and William Bradeney had been reeves (in c.1470 and 1500-01 respectively) ‘they repaired...a bridge next to the mill...from the undertakings and expenses of the lord’ being allowed these expenses at the audit of their accounts.⁶⁴ Whilst the context of this presentment is unclear, the outcome seems to have been aimed at ensuring the cost of repairing the bridge fell on the lord, and thus plausibly not on the tenants, an argument that the tenants could make due to their collective past integration into seigniorial management through service as reeves. Whilst Guldon was almost certainly deceased by 1528, Bradeney was still alive and present on the jury leet, if not the jury making the presentment, in the leet of 1528.⁶⁵ The ability of former officials to pass on their knowledge of service in office could provide a way to resist seigneurial exactions in the future.

Jurors could also take a role in ensuring the lord and his higher officials met expectations. Jean Birrell has recently emphasised that custumals were a key defence for tenants to constrain the demands of

their lords, and this can certainly be claimed for Worfield's 1403 custumal, which was effectively purchased by the tenants as a collective through a payment of £66 13s. 4d. for William Beauchamp's 'good lordship'.⁶⁶ This custumal codified that tenants owed mill suit but made clear that this was 'provided that the measures on our...mills be lawful and approved...according to what it shall be necessary to...take and the miller who shall be guilty of any...departure from upright dealing shall be punished'.⁶⁷ Manorial juries took the lead role in defending these rights, presenting millers both for unjust milling and not keeping the mill in good repair, the latter concern presumably due to concerns over their liability for repair works as well as need to mill.⁶⁸ These presentments could be extensive, as well as explicit fraud in measures, millers were also presented in 1409 and 1518 for keeping livestock in the mill which ate the tenants' grain.⁶⁹

Analogous practice can be seen at Horstead, and to a lesser extent at Downham, for much of the fifteenth century, where the lord and his bailiff were frequently presented for not maintaining infrastructure in the lord's hands or performing the work owed in the common watercourse.⁷⁰ A further unusual case is seen at Downham, in a series of presentments concerning rabbits from the lord's warren. In 1431, the jury presented that 'the lord's rabbits continue to do damage in the crops of the tenants...[they] yearly destroy all the harvested crops inside a furlong around the vill', bringing attention to a seigneurial activity damaging the community of tenants. Even more striking is that they also said 'that unless speedily...a remedy is found they wish to abandon their lands lying there into the lord's hand'.⁷¹ In a period when tenants were in short supply, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest an implicit threat in this statement. The complaint was made in a subsequent session, with it being noted that the rabbits had been destroying the grain 'for divers years gone' and that therefore the tenants 'cannot...work their lands...held of the lord'.⁷² It was ordered to discuss this with the lord, and, as the presentment does not appear again, this policy of raising attention to an issue in seigneurial management, and plausibly implying some pressure, may have been successful.

Therefore jurors used their position as presenting officials to highlight seigneurial practices which were damaging their community. They could also utilise their vital function in administering the manor court to pressure the lord to address tenants' concerns. This is seen in 1513, when the capital pledges at Horstead refused to 'render their verdict until the lord demonstrates settlements between him and the residents of the lord'.⁷³ Whilst it is impossible to know the outcome of this protest, or even what these 'settlements' were about, a marginal note orders for it to be inquired of the lord's council, and at the next leet session the capital pledges made presentments, suggesting a relatively quick resolution.⁷⁴ A Downham jury, for reasons unfortunately left unstated, also refused to render their verdict in 1380, and were thus placed under pain, although that they then agreed to present suggests a less successful protest.⁷⁵

The engagement of tenants via officeholding in the governing structure of the manor provided a route for tenants to soften seigneurial exactions and protest seigneurial policies. Concealment, verbal protests, presentments and even modest strikes allowed tenants, or at least those holding office, to mediate the effects of seigneurial actions on the local community.

III

Up to this point, this article has concentrated mainly on attitudes to officeholding in relation to the lord, finding that the officeholding system was not purely a seigneurial imposition, and served a vital purpose for tenants in terms of meeting crucial needs of governance and providing a way to temper and challenge seigneurial policies. There is however a chronological element to this argument. Most of the examples above are drawn from before 1475, suggesting the argument may not hold so well for the later period. On one level this is a problem of relying on qualitative evidence; as a rule the earlier rolls give more detail about the types of offences committed by officials, allowing for a close reading to understand motivations, whilst later records are more summary. For instance, at turn of the sixteenth-century Downham, officials were presented as they had ‘not done [their] office’ with the nature of this failure left unexplained.⁷⁶

Beyond this caveat, the largely fourteenth- and fifteenth-century chronology probably does reflect real changes. As lords increasingly moved away from direct cultivation towards leasing land there was simply less scope for corruption and mismanagement by officers that could negatively impact other officials, lords and tenants, or opportunities for tension between lord and tenants in which officeholding could be used for resistance.⁷⁷ Similarly, interpersonal litigation is normally argued to have been in decline in the manorial setting from the mid-fifteenth century, leaving presentment as the dominant procedure from this point onwards.⁷⁸ This would remove an aspect of officials’ roles that tenants as litigants were keen to ensure ran smoothly. Thus, it could be argued that tenants were committed to an effective officeholding system, but their investment saw a decline in line with waning lordship and interpersonal justice through the manor court.

However, little focus has as yet been given to the way officers were treated by their fellow tenants, or indeed how officers maintained their authority against external resistance, aspects of their roles that should be less sensitive to the shifting nature of seigneurial profits from manors or their use for civil litigation. The rolls are littered with presentments for resisting officers in their work, or questioning their decisions, allowing a picture of attitudes to office from those governed by, but not currently serving as, officers to be analysed. Obviously, these incidences are problematic in that they may only represent a proportion of resistance. Other forms may have been covert and so not uncovered; considered justifiable and thus not reported; or the perpetrator may have been able to actively or passively coerce officials into not censuring them. However, even this partial evidence at least allows

a glimpse into the way officeholding was perceived by tenants more widely, and how officers responded to challenges to their authority.

Table 1 here

Table 1 summarises the number of ‘resistance actions’ seen against reeves, messors, beadles and constables per decade for Worfield and Downham where these officers were present. Resistance actions have been taken to encompass any record of resistance to an official including ignoring orders, resisting arrest, resisting distraint, poundbreaking (when an official is explicitly mentioned) and assault. The most striking feature at both manors is the overall lack of evidence of resistance to officers performing their duties. Whilst clearly there were always incidents of resistance, there were also multiple and sometimes consecutive decades of no recorded instances. These figures seem low even in comparison to McIntosh’s for assaults at the manor of Havering, where she suggested an average of 0.5 per year for much of the fifteenth century showed that ‘the level of physical aggression against court officials was low’.⁷⁹ This is even more striking when it is considered that McIntosh only includes assaults in her calculation rather than all ‘resistance actions’. There is, furthermore, no particularly distinct chronological pattern, and the period after the Black Death does not stand out as an era of tensions, although there was an increase in both manors in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century. This suggests that officers did not face an unduly difficult position in the economic changes after the Plague, questioning the notion of these individuals as caught in the vice between lord and their fellow tenants, and signifying that resistance to officers cannot simply be thought of in terms of this relationship.

On the other hand, that attacks were presented reveals that officeholders, both when serving themselves and as jurors responsible for presentment, wanted to protect officers and ensure they could perform their role. As table 1 shows, generally punishments were under a shilling, putting them within the typical range of amercements for most offences on the manor, and suggesting they were not treated dissimilarly to these other offences. However, in four decades the average was significantly raised, in all cases occurring due to one unusually high payment. By looking at these instances, it is possible to consider challenges to officials that were perceived to be particularly egregious. For 1352 when Thomas de le Hethe was amerced 2s. for rescue against the reeve, it is hard to understand the reason for this stricter punishment.⁸⁰ Thomas had committed other offences for which he was amerced separately, perhaps explaining this increased severity, although on similar occasions at Worfield offenders were not amerced more. In two other instances, the reason for severity is more obvious, and indicates that the court system continued to protect officials against attacks, allowing them to perform their work. At Downham in 1411, the amercement of 10s. imposed on John Clement for abducting livestock out of the reeve’s custody was likely due to his status as an outsider of Ely and that he had taken three stray animals which were of significant value to the lord.⁸¹ The violence used against the

reeve was likely at issue when William Bulwardyn was amerced 20s. in 1501 at Worfield. Whilst William was likely also an outsider, being 'formerly of Claverley', the presentment details how he, along with his associates, came 'in force and arms namely staffs and knives' to assault the reeve and take an horse which the official had distrained 'for diverse offences and amercements previously made'.⁸² This unusual level of detail is evidence of the severity of this incident, explaining the unusually large amercement.

A final incident involving an exceptionally high amercement occurred in 1387 at Worfield, when John Bradeney was amerced 3s. 4d. This occurrence reveals a different form of severity. Bradeney insulted both the reeve and beadle 'in open court in the presence of the steward and the whole homage'.⁸³ The public nature of a direct challenge to officials was at issue here, the action was not simply resistance to them carrying out their duty in the moment, but a questioning of their status and authority more generally. This kind of resistance is more commonly evidenced in attacks on the position of jurors and capital pledges, which were seen at all three manors. Occasionally, the detail available only suggests a public insult to the jury; in 1565 Humphrey Russell was amerced 12d. for 'badly treating, scolding and calling the jury infamous', a rather inexplicable act in that the jury had just presented another tenant for unjustly drawing blood against the same Humphrey.⁸⁴ However, more typically the presentments specifically detail that the jury was called 'false' or 'perjurers' or that their deliberations were disputed, with this language being used across all the case studies.⁸⁵ These attacks are qualitatively different to those above committed against officials in the course of these duties. Whilst the former prevented officers carrying out their role, calling jurors false was a direct attack on their ability to govern the community and consequently met with an immediate punishment. On one occasion the potentially seditious nature of disputing the jury's decision is explicitly stated: in 1447, three tenants at Horstead were each amerced 12d. for calling the jury false 'in a bad example to others'.⁸⁶ Similarly, at Downham an entry of 1413 details how Robert Walsham had made accusations 'openly in court', whilst a presentment of 1439 details how Thomas Son of Stephen violated the jurors 'calling the same false publicly'.⁸⁷ Presentment of these offences went beyond simply punishing the individual offender, they worked to protect views contrary to the jurors' decisions from gaining any public circulation, and thus played an important role in maintaining the authority of jurors.

This authority extended beyond the court itself, with offences occurring outside this context being reported and punished. In 1409, an unknown individual described as 'one of the fellows of Walter de Swanton' was presented for 'disputing the decision of the capital pledges' at Horstead, the lack of a name suggesting that this dispute had not occurred in court.⁸⁸ At Downham, this is seen clearly in a presentment of 1444. John More, who is described explicitly as 'a serf of the lord', had 'openly in the tavern insulted, with diverse malicious words the tenants and capital pledges that presented the same for diverse defects'.⁸⁹ Clearly, More's actions were still a public act, but took place in a different public arena of the tavern, displaying how officers worked to maintain their authority in the

community even outside of court sessions. This 1444 presentment also connects an attack on the capital pledges and an attack on the tenants more widely, suggesting that an action which challenged the credit of the former had a similar effect on the latter. A similar connection is seen in 1483 at Horstead, when Nicholas and Thomas Aleyn ‘made contempt both of the lord and tenants...criticising and calling false and calling these said tenants knaves and harlots for their verdict made in court of diverse transgressions’ made by the same. The Aleyns had also made threats against the tenants ‘both in open court and outside the court’ at various places and times.⁹⁰ The reference to a ‘verdict made in court’ suggests that the insult was potentially aimed specifically at jurors, however the entry utilises the language of the general community of ‘tenants’ to give an impression of damage to the community as a whole.

These presentments reveal an active role by officials in maintaining their authority and suggest a far cry from a system that was either in decay, or placing individuals in an awkward vice between lord and fellow tenants. Those holding office responded decisively to attacks on the credit of their presentments and judgements, and thus challenges to their ability to govern, defending the legitimacy of the officeholding system. However, it is also important to consider the motivations and status of those who were making these attacks. Many medievalists have suggested that manorial officeholding was to some extent oligarchical, with service concentrated on a group of more prominent tenants.⁹¹ How far can presentments of abuse against officials be seen as resistance by an excluded group to a governing group, and largely independent of the lord? Unfortunately direct statements of motivation are rarely recorded in these type of entries. In the case of John More, the accusation of falsehood, according to the entry, directly flowed from presentments made against the offender in court, as did that of the Aleyns.⁹² In 1413, Robert Walsham was amerced 40d for complaining that the jury had ‘made false bylaws and customs’.⁹³ These presentments do seem to have resulted from a perception of unjust treatment by the officer group, although it is unclear whether these were the actions of aggrieved individuals or symptomatic of a more general undercurrent of hostility from a governed group.

One source of evidence to examine how far objections were the protests of an excluded group is to look at the identities of those protesting, to see if they were outside of the officeholding group. At Worfield, there is some evidence to support this position. Of 36 individuals identified as making a protest against officers 78% cannot be found serving in any office. This does, however, leave a large minority who both served in office and protested. At Downham, the figures are less convincing, of 33 individuals, only 45% cannot be found serving in office, thus the majority of protests were made by figures who were somehow ‘insiders’. Similarly, of the 5 men reported at Horstead, 4 held office. It is therefore hard to interpret protests against officeholders at these manors as objections by a subjugated to a dominant group. This cannot disprove stratification. The evidence of court rolls may simply not record the protests of a subjugated group, which if covert, may have been designed to avoid

presentment and punishment. However, it does suggest that the aim of officeholders in monitoring and presentment of resistance was to maintain their authority against protesting individuals generally drawn from the same group as those currently in office. Much like with the monitoring of abuse by serving officers, it aimed to preserve the authority of the officeholding system from damage by its own participants.

IV

An analysis of attitudes to office has revealed that the privileged group who served in these positions were strongly invested in the officeholding system. They sought to ensure that officials performed many aspects of their role efficiently and to an accepted standard and that the authority of officers was maintained in the face of physical and verbal dissent. This complicates models that have seen officers as solely mediating between lord and tenants, or that they could either work for the lord or community. Undoubtedly, officers could be caught between two countervailing pressures from above and below, and after the Black Death on certain estates like that of the Bishop of Durham this would seem the most accurate picture to adopt. However, surveying a longer period and focusing on aspects of officials' roles beyond demesne management by examining jurors and capital pledges alongside reeves and haywards, reveals that seeing the lord and a greater body of tenants as poles apart gives a one-dimensional picture of a more complex phenomenon. Whilst tenants and juries may have lacked the motivation to report illicit profits using seignorial resources or rights, failure and abuse in many other aspects of officials' work, such as maintaining seignorial banks and ditches, corruption in recording *intervivos* transfers and failing to enforce interpersonal suits could also negatively impact on the tenants. The authority of officers was maintained, a vital aspect in using them to govern local communities, and the integration of tenants into the lord's management of the manor allowed protests against certain aspects of seigneurial government. This perspective explains why there were so few overall attacks on the officeholding system in terms of abuse against officers.

This analysis has two greater ramifications. Firstly, it supports the early modern literature extending the importance of manorial courts in local governance into the post-medieval period. If tenants were committed to manorial office independently of seigneurial pressure, it explains why they would continue to use manor courts to organise and ensure the transfer of land, monitor common resources and infrastructure, and police the behaviour of the community. This usage had longer term roots in tenants' use and maintenance of manorial office for their own purposes in the medieval period.

This is not to suggest a steady state model, clearly manorial officers' roles' changed over time. For instance, as reeves increasingly shifted from being demesne managers to rent collectors, the capacity to use them to resist seigneurial pressures faded. However, other officials such as jurors and capital pledges were still able to present a significant range of business and therefore could still meet important roles after the waning of lordship. A more significant question is how far this model of

positive attitudes leading to extended use of manorial structures by tenants is applicable across a wider variety of manors. All three manors examined held courts leet, allowing them to police petty misbehaviour, this was not true of the majority of English manor courts which may have limited their utility to tenant communities. Furthermore, this study necessitated the selection of manors with good sixteenth-century records, which clearly has the potential to bias the findings towards active rather than moribund manor courts. Thus, the evidence adduced should not be taken to suggest that all manor courts were sustained beyond 1500 by tenants committed to their smooth running, but does provide a mechanism explaining how continued usage could occur on certain manors.

The second and more significant ramification of this analysis is to support the more positive view of lord-tenant relations seen in revisionist approaches. Both lord and tenants had a vested interest in the officeholding system. Policing officers could provide lord and tenants with a common objective. Even the role of officers in resisting aspects of seigneurial administration can be argued to have improved lord-tenant relations by providing a ‘safety valve’ by which tenants could peacefully resist aspects of lordship. Such a view strongly rejects the notion of a largely conflictual relationship even before 1349 and further reinforces the case against a ‘Feudal Reaction’ after the Black Death.

Of course, that officeholding necessarily benefitted all tenants is probably too benevolent a view. In maintaining the officeholding system and the authority of officers, the ‘elite’ tenants who served in office were preserving their own status and ability to govern the village as much as the position of the entire community of tenants. As Bruce Campbell has argued substantial tenants who served as officeholders ‘in maintaining the manorial status quo...served their own interests as well as those of lords’.⁹⁴ Thus the evidence of attitudes to office suggests that the manorial system in late medieval England was maintained through the collaboration of local elites with lords instead of simply through the coercive powers of lordship.

Table 1 – Number of ‘resistance actions’ and mean amercement per offender by decade at Little Downham and Worfield

Decade	Little Downham		Worfield	
	Number of Resistance Actions	Mean amercement per offender	Number of Resistance Actions	Mean amercement per offender
1310s	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
1320s	0	N/A	0	N/A
1330s	0	N/A	1	3d.
1340s	N/A	N/A	0	N/A
1350s	N/A	N/A	2	1s. 2d.
1360s	1	4d.	1	6d.
1370s	0	N/A	3	6d.
1380s	1	3d.	3	2s. 5d.
1390s	1	6d.	2	6d.
1400s	8	8d.	0	N/A
1410s	4	2s. 5d.	4	9d.

1420s	3	6d.	0	N/A
1430s	3	6d.	3	7d.
1440s	1	3d.	1	1s.
1450s	0	N/A	0	N/A
1460s	0	N/A	0	N/A
1470s	0	N/A	0	N/A
1480s	2	4d.	0	N/A
1490s	2	3d.	2	10d.
1500s	2	6d.	3	10s. 3d.
1510s	N/A	N/A	0	N/A
1520s	N/A	N/A	3	7d.
1530s	N/A	N/A	0	N/A
1540s	N/A	N/A	2	8d.
1550s	2	6d.	3	8d.
1560s	0	N/A	2	2s.
1570s	0	N/A	1	6d.
1580s	0	N/A	0	N/A
1590s	N/A	N/A	0	N/A

Notes: N/A refers to decades for which no rolls survive.

Sources: CUL, EDR, C11/1/1-3, C11/2/4-6, C11/3/7-10; SAC, P314/W/1/1/1-840.

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² Hilton, *English peasantry*, pp. 231-4; C.C. Dyer *Lords and peasants in a changing society: the estates of the bishopric of Worcester, 680-1540*, (1980), pp. 52, 265; R. Faith, *The English peasantry and the growth of lordship*, (1997), p. 256; J.S. Beckerman, 'Procedural innovation and institutional change in medieval English manorial courts', *Law and Hist. Rev.*, 10:2, (1992), pp. 199-200; R. Evans, 'Whose was the manorial court?', in R. Evans (ed.), *Lordship and learning: studies in memory of Trevor Aston*, (2004), pp. 155-8; S.H. Rigby, *English society in the later middle ages: class, status and gender*, (1995), pp. 25-8.

³ R. Evans, 'Merton College's control of its tenants at Thorncroft, 1270-1349', in Z. Razi and R.M. Smith (eds.), *Medieval society and the manor court*, (1996), p. 254.

⁴ M. Bailey, *The English manor c.1200-c.1500*, (2002), pp. 98-9, 171-4.

⁵ Bailey, *English manor*, pp.181-3.

⁶ Following the convention found in the secondary literature, here hired manorial officials are referred to as bailiffs to distinguish them from officials drawn from among the lord's tenants, although in the actual documentation the nomenclature is often less clear cut.

⁷ Bailey, *English manor*, pp. 99-100, 171.

⁸ Bailey, *English manor*, pp.100-104.

⁹ Hilton, *English peasantry*, pp. 57-8.

¹⁰ D. Stone, *Decision making in medieval agriculture*, (2005), pp. 189-203.

¹¹ P.D.A. Harvey, *A medieval Oxfordshire village: Cuxham, 1240-1400*, (1965), pp. 69-71; C.D. Briggs, 'Monitoring demesne managers through the manor court before and after the Black Death', in J. Langdon, R. Goddard and M. Müller (eds.), *Survival and discord in medieval society: essays in honour of Christopher Dyer*, (2010) p. 180; Dyer, *Lords and peasants*, 114; M. Carlin, 'Cheating the boss: Robert Carpenter's embezzlement instructions (1261x1268) and employee fraud in medieval England' in B. Dodds and C.D. Liddy (eds.), *Commercial activity, markets and entrepreneurs in the Middle Ages: essays in honour of Richard Britnell*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), pp. 184-190.

¹² R.H. Britnell, 'Feudal reaction after the Black Death in the palatinate of Durham', *Past & Present*, 128, (1990), pp. 1-2; P.V. Hargreaves, 'Seigniorial reaction and peasant responses: Worcester priory and its peasants after the Black Death', *Midland Hist.*, 24, (1999), pp. 53-5, 73-4.

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- ¹⁷ Larson, *Conflict and Compromise*, pp. 235-30; M. Bailey *The decline of serfdom in late medieval England: from bondage to freedom*, (2014), pp. 326-9.
- ¹⁸ C.C. Dyer and R.W. Hoyle, 'Britain 1000-1750' in B.J.P. van Bavel and R.W. Hoyle (eds.), *Social relations: property and power*, (2010), p. 67; Dyer, 'Medieval village', pp. 428-9; Beckerman, 'Procedural Innovation', p. 200.
- ¹⁹ Harvey, *Oxfordshire village*, 69-70; C.C. Dyer, 'The political life of the fifteenth-century English village' in L. Clark and C. Carpenter (eds.), *Political culture in late medieval Britain*, (2004), p. 141; Larson, *Conflict and compromise*, pp. 22-7, 58; M. Müller, 'A divided class? peasants and peasant communities in later medieval England', in P.R. Coss and C. Wickham (eds.), *Rodney Hilton's middle ages: an exploration of historical themes*, (2007), pp. 115-31, 117-8.
- ²⁰ P.R. Schofield, *Peasants and community in medieval England, 1200-1500*, (2003), pp. 42-4, 168; Evans, 'Merton College's control of its tenants', p. 210; Briggs, 'Monitoring demesne managers', p. 180.
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- ²⁸ L. Shaw-Taylor, 'The Management of Common Land in the Lowlands of Southern England, C.1500-C.1850' in P. Warde, L. Shaw-Taylor and M. de Moor (eds.), *The management of common land in North West Europe, C.1500-1850*, (2002), pp. 63-8; A.J.L. Winchester, *The harvest of the hills: rural life in Northern England and the Scottish Borders, 1400-1700*, (2000), pp. 33, 148-51.
- ²⁹ B. Waddell, 'Governing England through the manor courts, 1550-1850', *The Hist. J.*, 55 (2012), pp. 280, 301-7.
- ³⁰ Unfortunately, none of these court roll series are entirely complete. Downham's court rolls survive 1310-1582 with gaps of more than three years for 1317-22, 1336-61, 1475-83 and 1509-51. Horstead's rolls survive for 1392-1599 with gaps of more than three years for 1494-1510 and 1562-5. Worfield's rolls survive 1327-1600, but with gaps of more than three years 1467-71 and 1542-7 as well as very patchy survival pre-Black Death.
- ³¹ D. Oschinsky (ed.), *Walter of Henley and other treatises on estate management and accounting*, (1971), pp. 274-281 [c.35-49], 317 [c.33-5].
- ³² Harvey, *Oxfordshire village*, p. 66 n.1; Briggs, 'Monitoring demesne managers', pp. 184-5.
- ³³ Evans, 'Whose was the manorial court?', p. 164.
- ³⁴ Shropshire Archive Centre [hereafter SAC], P314/W/1/1/212, c.1393.
- ³⁵ SAC, P314/W/1/1/184, 2 Dec. 1392.
- ³⁶ Harvey notes the common practice of charging reeves with the debts of their predecessors: Harvey, *Oxfordshire village*, 67 n.8.

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- ³⁷ Briggs notes the overall responsibility of demesne managers for their subordinates: Briggs, 'Monitoring demesne managers', 183.
- ³⁸ SAC, P314/W/1/1/244, 14 May 1416.
- ³⁹ Dyer notes the joint accounting practices of beadles with reeves on manors of the Bishop of Worcester: Dyer, *Lords and peasants*, 114.
- ⁴⁰ Cambridge University Library, Ely Diocesan Records [hereafter CUL, EDR], C11/2/4, m.30, 28 Dec. 1412.
- ⁴¹ Briggs, 'Monitoring demesne managers', pp. 190, 194-5.
- ⁴² CUL, EDR, C11/1/1, m.6, 27 Feb. 1316.
- ⁴³ Briggs, 'Monitoring demesne managers', p. 18.
- ⁴⁴ Evans, 'Whose was the manor court?', p. 161.
- ⁴⁵ CUL, EDR, C11/1/1, m.7, 13 Dec. 1324; C11/1/3, m.4, 28 Nov. 1379; C11/2/5, m.17, 26 Jan. 1422.
- ⁴⁶ SAC, P314/W/1/1/233, 1 July 1405.
- ⁴⁷ SAC, P314/W/1/1/233, 28 July 1405.
- ⁴⁸ SAC, P314/W/1/1/234 10 Mar. 1406; P314/W/1/1/234, 27 Sept. 1406.
- ⁴⁹ A statement of the reeve's role in legitimating *intervivos* transfers is seen in an inquiry of 1404: SAC, P314/W/1/1/232, 6 Apr. 1404.
- ⁵⁰ SAC, P314/W/1/1/190, 1 Dec. 1394; P314/W/1/1/191, 27 Jan. 1395; P314/W/1/1/192, 20 Feb. 1395; P314/W/1/1/195, 23 Oct. 1395; P314/W/1/1/234, 27 Sept. 1406; P314/W/1/1/240, 9 Feb. 1412; P314/W/1/1/240, 1 Mar. 1412; P314/W/1/1/243, 10 Dec. 1414; CUL, EDR, C11/1/3, m.6, 25 Sept. 1380.
- ⁵¹ SAC, P314/W/1/1/249, 13 June 1418.
- ⁵² CUL, EDR, C11/1/1, m.8, 28 Jan. 1326.
- ⁵³ SAC, P314/W/1/1/34, 5 Aug. 1353.
- ⁵⁴ SAC, P314/W/1/1/199, 6 Sept. 1396.
- ⁵⁵ CUL, EDR, C11/2/4, m.29, 14 Dec. 1411.
- ⁵⁶ CUL, EDR, C11/2/6, m.50, 20 June 1455.
- ⁵⁷ King's College Archives [hereafter KCA], HOR/37, unfoliated, 25 Aug. 1429.
- ⁵⁸ KCA, HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1439; SAC, P314/W/1/1/459, 10 Oct. 1485.
- ⁵⁹ CUL, EDR, C11/1/2, m.7, 2 Dec. 1332; C11/2/4, m.12, 23 Sept. 1404.
- ⁶⁰ KCA, HOR/36, unfoliated, 11 June 1408.
- ⁶¹ KCA, HOR/31, unfoliated, 11 June 1402.
- ⁶² CUL, EDR, C11/3/11, unfoliated, 9 Mar. 1571.
- ⁶³ CUL, EDR, C11/3/11, unfoliated, 12 Mar. 1578.
- ⁶⁴ SAC, P314/W/1/1/630, 3 Dec. 1528; P314/W/1/1/499, 10 Aug. 1500. Unfortunately, William Gyldon is described in the entry as having served 25 years before Bradeney and thus likely sometime in the gap in the rolls between 1466 and 1472.
- ⁶⁵ SAC, P314/W/1/1/630, 3 Dec. 1528.
- ⁶⁶ J. Birrell, 'Manorial customals reconsidered', *P&P*, 224, (2014), pp. 33-7; SAC, P314/W/1/1/226, 25 Apr. 1403.
- ⁶⁷ SAC, 5586/2/1/42.
- ⁶⁸ That customary tenants were required to repair the mill is seen in several court-roll entries ordering them to do so: SAC, P314/W/1/1/371, 14 June 1475; P314/W/1/1/386, 30 May 1477; P314/W/1/1/418, 3 Apr. 1481; P314/W/1/1/560, 17 Apr. 1521; P314/W/1/1/572, 10 Aug. 1523; P314/W/1/1/506, 27 Jan. 1512; P314/W/1/1/648, 18 June 1534; P314/W/1/1/649, 29 July 1535; P314/W/1/1/773, 2 Nov. 1570.
- ⁶⁹ SAC, P314/W/1/1/37, 21 May 1355; P314/W/1/1/200, 28 Oct. 1396; P314/W/1/1/238, 29 Oct. 1409; P314/W/1/1/544, 31 May 1518.
- ⁷⁰ KCA, HOR/33, unfoliated, 11 June 1410; HOR/33, unfoliated, 11 June 1412; HOR/34, unfoliated, 11 June 1413; HOR/34, unfoliated, 11 June 1414; HOR/34, unfoliated, 11 June 1415; HOR/34, unfoliated, 11 June 1420; HOR/34, unfoliated, 11 June 1421; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1423; HOR/37, unfoliated, 14 Sept. 1424; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1427; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1428; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1429; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1430; HOR/34, unfoliated, 11 June 1433; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1436; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1437; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1438; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1439; HOR/36, unfoliated, 11 June 1444; HOR/37, unfoliated, 18 June 1446; HOR/37, unfoliated, 25 July 1450; HOR/37, unfoliated, 11 June 1452; HOR/37, unfoliated, 31 July 1458; HOR/39, m.6, 11 June 1463; HOR/39, m.32, 3 Aug. 1475; CUL, EDR, C11/2/6, m.19, 20 Mar. 1431; C11/2/6, m.29, 4 Dec. 1439; C11/3/7, m.20, 13 May 1472.
- ⁷¹ CUL, EDR, C11/2/6, m.19, 20 Mar. 1431.
- ⁷² CUL, EDR, C11/2/6, m.20, 20 Sept. 1431.
- ⁷³ KCA, HOR/45, m.5, 11 June 1513.
- ⁷⁴ KCA, HOR/45, m.7, 4 May 1514.
- ⁷⁵ CUL, EDR, C11/1/3, m.6, 3 Aug. 1380.

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- ⁷⁶ CUL, EDR, C11/3/10, m.9, 14 Sept. 1494; C11/3/10, m.13, 23 Aug. 1498; C11/3/10, m.17, 1 Jan. 1501; C11/3/10, m.24, 20 Sept. 1508.
- ⁷⁷ B.F. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its estates in the middle ages*, (1977), pp. 148-151; M. Bailey, 'Rural society', in R. Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth-century attitudes: perceptions of society in late medieval England*, (1994), pp. 152-4
- ⁷⁸ C.D. Briggs, 'Seigniorial control of villagers' litigation beyond the manor in later medieval England', *Hist. Research*, 81:213, (2008), p. 421; Beckerman, 'Procedural innovation', pp. 243-5.
- ⁷⁹ M.K. McIntosh, *Autonomy and community: the royal manor of Havering, 1200-1500*, (1986), table 13, pp. 211-5.
- ⁸⁰ SAC, P314/W/1/1/34, 22 May 1352.
- ⁸¹ CUL, EDR, C11/2/4, m.27, 1 Apr. 1411.
- ⁸² SAC, P314/W/1/1/500, 13 Oct. 1501.
- ⁸³ SAC, P314/W/1/1/162, 15 July 1387.
- ⁸⁴ SAC, P314/W/1/1/758, 16 Oct. 1565.
- ⁸⁵ SAC, P314/W/1/1/199, 6 Sept. 1396; KCA, HOR/33, unfoliated, 2 Aug. 1409; HOR/37, unfoliated, 6 Jan. 1447; HOR/40, m.1, 4 Nov. 1483; CUL, EDR, C11/2/4, m.7, 7 Mar. 1402; C11/2/5, m.1, 22 Dec. 1413; C11/2/5, m.7, 12 Jan. 1417; C11/2/6, m.4, 14 Jan. 1424; C11/2/6, m.29, 4 Dec. 1439; C11/2/6, m.32, 13 Dec. 1440; C11/3/10, unfoliated, 7 Jan. 1562.
- ⁸⁶ KCA, HOR/37, unfoliated, 6 Jan. 1447.
- ⁸⁷ CUL, EDR, C11/2/5, m.1, 22 Dec. 1413; C11/2/6, m.29, 4 Dec. 1439.
- ⁸⁸ KCA, HOR/33, unfoliated, 2 Aug. 1409.
- ⁸⁹ CUL, EDR, C11/2/6, m.37, 20 Nov. 1444.
- ⁹⁰ KCA, HOR/40, m.1, 4 Nov. 1483.
- ⁹¹ E. Britton, *The community of the vill: a study in the history of the family and village life in fourteenth-century England*, (1977), pp. 44-9, 104-5; Z. Razi, *Life, Marriage and death in a medieval parish: economy, society and demography in Halesowen 1270-1400*, (1980), pp. 76-7; C.C. Dyer, 'Power and conflict in the medieval English village', in C.C. Dyer, *Everyday life in medieval England*, (1994), p. 7; C.C. Dyer, 'Political life', pp. 142-3; M. Spufford, 'Puritanism and social control?' in A.J. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds.), *Order and disorder in early modern England*, (1985), pp. 49-50; R.M. Smith, 'Contrasting susceptibility to famine in early fourteenth- and late sixteenth-century England: the significance of late medieval rural social structural and village governmental changes', in M.J. Braadick and P. Withington (eds.), *Popular culture and political agency in early modern England and Ireland: essays in honour of John Walter*, (2017), p. 49.
- ⁹² CUL, EDR, C11/2/6, m.37, 20 Nov. 1444; KCA, HOR/40, m.1, 4 Nov. 1483.
- ⁹³ CUL, EDR, C11/2/5, m.1, 22 Dec. 1413.
- ⁹⁴ Campbell, 'The land', p. 224.