



VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

LITTLE ROLLRIGHT

Local Government

## Manor Courts and Officers

By the 13th century Eynsham abbey held regular manor courts for its free and customary tenants, profits from a Michaelmas session in 1325 totalling 16*d.*<sup>1</sup> In 1382 the court admitted a tenant to a vacant holding, and penalized others for fleeing the manor or for nuisances.<sup>2</sup> The courts continued into the 15th century, dealing mostly with minor misdemeanours,<sup>3</sup> but may have ceased following the Dissolution. A constable was mentioned in 1377.<sup>4</sup>

In 1233 the abbot was exempted for life from performing suit for Little Rollright at county and hundred courts.<sup>5</sup> By 1279 that exemption had lapsed, and the abbot owed three-weekly suit at Chadlington's hundred court along with 10*s.* hidage, 5*d.* wardpenny, 12*d.* certainty money, and 12*d.* for the sheriff's tourn, sums which Little Rollright's tenants undertook to pay. View of frankpledge was held annually in Little Rollright by the earl of Gloucester's bailiff, who collected any fines on the earl's behalf.<sup>6</sup> In 1325 around a fifth of the hidage and wardpenny (2*s.* 7½*d.*) was paid by the manor's reeve, presumably supplementing the tenants' contribution, but in 1547–52 the tithingman remained liable for the total payment of 12*s.* 5*d.*<sup>7</sup>

## Parish Government and Officers

A churchwarden (the farmer John Ballard) was mentioned in 1530,<sup>8</sup> and a single churchwarden was appointed thereafter, often a leading farmer who served for several years.<sup>9</sup> The parish also had its own overseers,<sup>10</sup> who in the 1870s–80s were the farmer James Bliss (serving also as guardian of the poor) and the gardener and parish clerk

<sup>1</sup> *Rot. Hund.* II, 744; BL, Harl. Roll E27.

<sup>2</sup> TNA, SC 2/197/14; above, social hist.

<sup>3</sup> BL, Harl. Rolls K30–1.

<sup>4</sup> *Poll Taxes 1377–81*, ed. Fenwick, II, 305.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1232–47, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Rot. Hund.* II, 744.

<sup>7</sup> BL, Harl. Roll E27; GA, D9125/3/26, f. 45; TNA, LR 2/189, f. 109; *ibid.* SC 2/197/20–1.

<sup>8</sup> *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 46.

<sup>9</sup> OHC, MSS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. b 41, f. 64; c 95, ff. 130–251.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* NP/V/1 (dated 1737).

Thomas Woodward.<sup>11</sup> No vestry meeting is known, and no parish meeting was established under the 1894 Local Government Act.<sup>12</sup> From 1834 the parish belonged to Chipping Norton Poor Law Union and from 1894 to the newly formed Chipping Norton Rural District, and was united with Great Rollright in 1932.<sup>13</sup>

For ecclesiastical purposes Little Rollright had its own parochial church council from 1970 to 1980, when a new joint council was established with Little Compton, Chastleton, Cornwell, and Salford. In the early 21st century Little Rollright appointed two churchwardens.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Oxon. Weekly News*, 25 Apr. 1877, 16 Apr. 1879; *Oxf. Jnl*, 12 Apr. 1884; *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1883).

<sup>12</sup> *Oxon. Weekly News*, 19 Dec. 1894 (list of Oxon. par. mtgs).

<sup>13</sup> Youngs, *Admin. Units*, I, 404; above, Great Rollright, local govt.

<sup>14</sup> Information from Joy Timms (Mar. 2021); *Oxf. Dioc. Year Book* (2009), 66–7; above, relig. hist. (paroch. organizn).