

Manorial Court Records: Working with Latin records

Terms:

- Court Leet - responsible for minor criminal offences
- Court Baron - responsible for regulating and administering the affairs of the manor
- Surrenders and Admissions
- Conditional Surrender – akin to a secured loan or mortgage
- Surrender to Will (creating a trust)
- Permissions e.g. permission to sub-let, permission to use (particularly waste/common land)
- Death and inheritance
- Proclamation (First/Second/Third) - On the death of a copyhold tenant a request was made for those with an interest in the land (heirs/prospective tenants) to attend court and claim the property. These were known as proclamations. These were also made in the case of a tenant surrendering a property with no immediate successor. They would take place on three consecutive courts until someone came forward, and if no one came forward the property fell back to the Lord of the Manor. In the case of a death, the Lord of the Manor would then be free to admit anyone who so wished to be admitted.
- Copyhold/customary land held by copy of the court roll subject to the customs of the manor

'Standard' phrases: English

- Start of an entry “At this court comes...”
- Subsequent entries may begin “Also they present...”
- The description of the property will follow a phrase such as “All that copyhold/customary...”
- Who is being admitted will follow “To the use and behoof ...”
- And “To have and to hold to ... by copy of court roll at the will of the Lord according to the custom of the manor”
- By the Rod - a rod/staff would be held out to the new tenant by the steward as a public sign that he had been admitted.
- Heriot – confirming there was also a payment to be made to the Lord on the death of the tenant
- Fealty – oath of loyalty to the Lord of the Manor
- Conditional surrender ““Subject nevertheless to and upon this express condition...”
“Shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid to [name/amount/rate] together with interest on the same at the rate of [interest] ... then this surrender to be void and of no effect otherwise it is to remain in full force and virtue

'Standard' phrases: Latin

- **Messuagium** – message, house, holding
- **tenementum** – tenement
- **consuetudinarium cotagium** – customary cottage
- **[h]orreu** – barn
- **pomarium** – orchard
- **terra arabilis** – arable/ploughable land
- **pratium** – meadow
- **acre terre** – acres of land
- **rode** – roads
- **parcelle terre** – parcels of land
- **vocatus (abbreviation “vocat”)** – called, named
- **nuper in tenure** – in recent tenure/recently held by

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- ***quondam*** – formerly, in the past
- ***sive plus sive minus*** – more or less
- ***adjungens*** – adjoining
- ***continens*** – containing
- ***continens per estimacionem*** – containing by assessment/estimation
- ***ad opus et usum*** – to work and use/to the use and benefit
- ***in plena curia*** – in full court (in open court)
- ***in propria persona sua*** – in his own person
- ***heredum et assignatorum suorum imperpetuum*** – of his heirs and assigns for ever
- ***secundum consuetudinem manerii*** – according to the custom of the manor
- ***redditus*** – rent
- ***fecit finem pro ingressu*** – he paid an entry fine
- ***est infans infra etatem viginti et unius annorum*** – he/she is a child under the age of twenty-one years
- ***admissus est guardianus*** – *the guardian was admitted/he was admitted as guardian*
- ***Obiit*** – died
- ***obiit inde seisitus*** – died seized of/in possession of
- ***Hereditas*** – inheritance
- ***heres/heredis*** – heir/s
- ***homagium*** – homage, jury
- ***Anno regni regis (domini nostri)*** – in the year of the reign of (our Lord) the King
- ***Anno regni (domine) regine*** – in the year of the reign of the (lady) Queen
- ***humiliter petit[ionum]*** – he/she humbly requests
- Court Baron – ***Curia Baronis/Curia Parva***
- Court Leet – ***Curia Leta/Curia Magna***
- View of Frankpledge – ***Visus Franciplegii***
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Court dates in Latin – regnal years

Jovis vicesimo die Octobris Anno regni d[omi]ni n[ost]r[i] Caroli s[e]c[un]d[i] dei gr[at]ia Anglie Scot[ie] Franc[ie] et Hib[er]nie Regis fidei Defensor[is] &c vicesimo s[e]c[un]do sup[ra]d[i]c[t]o Anno[ue] d[omi]ni 1670

Thursday twentieth day October the year of the reign of (our Lord) Charles second by the grace of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King faith defender etc 22nd aforesaid year of the lord 1670

On Thursday, the twentieth day of October, in the aforesaid 22nd year of the reign of our lord Charles the Second, by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, and in the year of the Lord 1670

Tips for Manorial records generally and Latin anomalies

- Most relevant for copyhold/customary land holders
- Formulaic
- Surnames/full names often in margin
- Manorial Court books are often indexed
- Start with later records in English
- Useful Latin terms to know
- Medieval Latin - crunched diphthongs –e = -ae
- j = i
- u = v
- c = t
- F = Ph
- Lost of initial H e.g. Orreum = Horreum (barn)

Useful websites:

Manorial Documents Register (MDR) - <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search>

British History Online - <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

Latin lessons - www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin

University of Nottingham glossary of terms -
<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/manorial/glossary.aspx>

Cumbria Manorial Records website –
<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/manorialrecords/manors/classes.htm#Interpreting>
https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/manorialrecords/gallery/court_books.htm

For Latin Courses – Keele University Palaeography and Latin Summer School

Suggested further reading:

PDA Harvey, Manorial records (British Records Association, Archives and the User series, no. 5, 1984)

Mary Ellis, Using Manorial Records (Public Record Office Readers Guide, 1997)

Denis Stuart, Manorial Records: an introduction to their transcription and translation (Chichester: Phillimore, 1992)

JW Molyneux-Child, The English Manorial System (Lewes: The Book Guild, 1987)

Ian H Waller, Introducing Manorial Records: Unlocking the Mysteries of the Manor for Family Historians (The Family History Partnership (17 Jun. 2020))

Mark Forrest & Helen Watt, Manors and Manorial Documents After 1500 (British Association for Local History, 2022)

Mark Bailey, The English Manor c1200-c1500 (Manchester University Press, 2002)

Janet Morris, A Latin Glossary for family and Land Historians (The Family History Partnership, reprinted 2009)

Eileen A. Gooder, Latin for Local History: An Introduction (Longman Paperback, 1978 2nd edition)

Denis Stuart, Latin for Local & Family Historians (Phillimore, reprinted 2012)