

Parish/township: MOSSER

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

No records of a manor court at Mosser are known to survive, other than a copy of an award by a jury of thirteen men at a court held there 'for Lord and Neighbourheid' in 1583, settling a dispute concerning the division of pasture ground.¹ After the effective extinguishment of the manor as a result of enfranchisement, disputes between tenants and other agrarian matters were brought to the baronial court leet of Egremont Lordship, to which the township regularly continued to send a 'turnsman' until 1780.²

In the later medieval period, Mosser was one of the hamlets which formed the vill of Murton.³

By the mid-eighteenth century the community at Mosser held regular meetings to discharge the local government responsibilities which fell to it as a township. Constables, overseers of the poor and surveyors of highways were appointed, apparently by rotation among the rate-payers. The 'vestry' meetings were held in farmhouses, usually at the home of the overseer, on a Friday or Saturday evening.⁴ As well as an annual meeting in the spring to settle the overseer's accounts and to appoint the new overseer, vestries were held as required (often in January) to determine how the township should proceed in the cases of individual paupers.⁵ The vestry also met to decide whether to pursue action over agrarian matters (such as encroachments on the common, or the upkeep of hedges) at the court leet of Egremont Lordship.⁶

Mosser fell naturally within the hinterland of the market town of Cockermouth and the township became part of Cockermouth Poor Law Union in 1838 and Cockermouth Rural District in 1894. Mosser lost its identity as a separate administrative unit in 1934, when it was combined with the adjacent townships of Blindbothel and Whinfell to create the new civil parish of Blindbothel.⁷

¹ CRO, YDX 208/2.

² CRO, D/Lec, box 247, Egremont Lordship court rolls 1639-43; court leet verdicts, 1677-1845.

³ CRO, D/Lons/5/1/MP. See A. J. L. Winchester, 'The medieval vill in the western Lake District: some problems of definition', *CW2*, 78 (1978), pp. 55-69.

⁴ The pattern of meetings is drawn from Fletcher, *Diary*, pp. 6, 41, 46, 52, 82, 139, 169, 250, 254, 342, 384.

⁵ E.g. Fletcher, *Diary*, pp. 8 (3 June 1756), 22 (14 Jan. 1757), 77 (9 Feb. 1760), 296 (21 Jan. 1775), 382 (5 Jan. 1780).

⁶ Fletcher, *Diary*, pp. 254 (18 and 21 Aug. 1772), 342 (23 Sep. 1777).

⁷ Cumberland Review Order, 1934.