



The Little Parish with a Big Story

The Shammick Chronicle



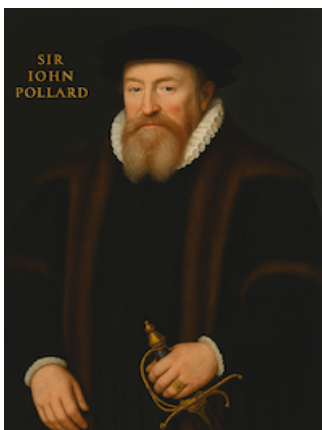
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Combe Martin: From Feudal Manor to Coastal Heritage

A Special Feature on Sir John Pollard (1508–1575)

Published by the Combe Martin Village History Project (CMVHP)

“Out of the World and into Combe Martin”



CMVHP Artist's Impression

The Man Who Ended Feudal Combe Martin

**Sir John Pollard (1508–1575), MP, Speaker of the
House of Commons.**

**Sir John inherited Combe Martin Manor from his
father, Sir Richard Pollard—an agent of Thomas
Cromwell during the Dissolution of the Monasteries.**

Sir John Pollard left money to the poor of Combe Martin, where he owned the manor, and bequests to his daughters.

In a landmark act of redistribution, Sir John sold Combe Martin Manor lands to its tenants, and the demesne to his servant William Hancock.

This sale marked the end of feudal lordship in Combe Martin and the beginning of community-based ownership. It reflected broader Tudor reforms under Henry VIII, where land ceased to be a symbol of inherited power and became a tool for social mobility and public benefit.

Pollard died in Combe Martin, leaving behind a legacy of legal reform, land redistribution, and symbolic transition from medieval hierarchy to modern tenancy.



Timeline: From Feudalism to Freedom

| Year | Event |
|--------------|---|
| 1066 | Norman Conquest; Combe Martin becomes a feudal manor under Norman Barons |
| 1264 | Market charter granted by King Henry III |
| 1537 | Manor granted to Sir Richard Pollard by Henry VIII |
| 1570s | Sir John Pollard sells lands to tenants and Hancock |
| 1851 | Combe Martin silver showcased at the Great Exhibition |
| 2002 | Guinness World Record for Britain's longest street party |

Combe Martin's River UMBER: Engine of Industry

The River UMBER powered mills, launched schooners, and irrigated gardens. Between 1837 and 1843, John Dovell and Robert Tanner Partridge operated a steam sawmill and shipyard here.

Schooners like the *Mary and Elizabeth* were built and floated down to Combe Martin Harbour.

Today, a mill grindstone remains embedded in Combe Martin's Cross Street—a quiet monument to industrial ingenuity.

Educator's Corner

This page is licensed for non-commercial classroom use. Teachers can use it to explore:

- **Tudor land reforms and the decline of feudalism**
- **Industrial heritage and coastal geography**
- **Local history as a lens for national change**

Growing Up in Shamwick

A Glimpse into Combe Martin's Past

In an evocative oral history told to *The Devon Historian* in 1979, Mrs. E.D. Parsons—aged 84 in 1979 and a lifelong resident and proud Shammickite—recounts life in Combe Martin at the turn of the 20th century.

Her memories paint a vivid portrait of Victorian and Edwardian Combe Martin, a self-sufficient coastal village then called “Shamwick” and shaped by craftsmanship, community, and resilience.

From lime kilns and silver mines to paraffin street lamps and moonlit lamplighters, Mrs Parsons describes a world without electricity, running water, or modern transport.

Young children were apprenticed, shops stayed open late, and Sundays were reserved for worship—not beach visits.

The village's nickname “Shamwick,” once a slur, became a badge of pride for locals who embraced their heritage.

Highlights include:

- **Boat-building on Newberry Beach and dramatic tales from the Silver Mines Royal**
- **Garden pigs, homegrown produce, and mease upon mease of herrings (630 per mease!)**
- **Schools divided by maroon curtains and strict headmistresses**
- **Dentistry by brass wire, and telegrams delivered by pony**
- **Market gardeners trekking to Ilfracombe with baskets of fresh vegetables**

Mrs. Parsons' recollections are more than nostalgia—they're a testament to the grit and grace of Combe Martin's people.

Her story reminds us that history lives not just in archives, but in the voices of those who walked the muddy streets, lit the gas lamps, and kept the village spirit burning.

Next time you stroll through High Street or visit Newberry Beach, imagine the clatter of hooves, the scent of coal, and Shammickites travelling to market in Ilfracombe over a century ago.

Read the full article on the [Combe Martin Village History Project website](#).

Reader Feedback

We value your thoughts and input! Your feedback is essential in shaping future editions of "The Shammick Chronicle."

Please share your comments on this issue and let us know what topics you'd like to see covered in upcoming newsletters.

Whether it's local legends, historical events, or community stories, your suggestions are important to us. Feel free to reach out via [email to CMVHP](#).

References:

The History of Parliament: [POLLARD, Sir John \(c.1528-75\), of Trelawne, Cornw. and Bishopsgate, London. | History of Parliament Online](#) .

[Memories of Old Combmartin \(Shamwick\) / Community | Combe Martin Village History \[The Little Parish with a Big Story\]](#).

[Combe Martin Famous People / Community | Combe Martin Village History \[The Little Parish with a Big Story\]](#).

Combe Martin Village History Project (CMVHP)

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