

Guide to the Combe Martin Village History Project Digital Archive

Version 1.1

A Finding Aid to the Combe Martin Village History Project

Over three years, [the Combe Martin Village History Project](#) has developed into a substantial digital local-history archive. It covers the history, people, buildings, industries, landscape, communities and traditions of Combe Martin and its surrounding North Devon landscape.

This guide provides a structured catalogue of the archive's principal articles, research papers, documentary sources and related digital resources.

How to use this guide

The catalogue is intended as a **finding aid**. It helps researchers identify material relevant to a particular subject, period, person or place - and then follow the links or search the archive for the original resource.

The archive contains several different kinds of material:

- original CMVHP research and historical synthesis;
- transcriptions and discussions of historical documents;
- contemporary community records;
- oral and photographic material;
- research papers available as downloadable PDFs;
- bibliographical and reference material;
- links to external institutional archives and specialist resources.

These categories should not be treated as equivalent sources. A nineteenth-century directory, for example, is a historical primary source; a modern CMVHP article discussing that directory is a secondary interpretation of it.

Principal subject areas

The archive can broadly be explored through the following themes:

Early and medieval history

- Domesday and the Norman Conquest
- the Martin and FitzMartin families
- the baronies of Dartington and Barnstaple
- the medieval manor
- place-name history and toponymy
- the Battle of Cynwit and the Viking/West-Saxon period

Mining and industry

- silver and silver-lead mining
- iron and other minerals
- ores and smelting
- mining archaeology
- lime burning and quarrying
- mills and milling
- hemp
- culm
- industrial topography

Agriculture and economic change

- farming
- market gardening
- strawberries
- changing village industries
- shops and businesses

Maritime history

- harbour and coastal activity
- shipbuilding
- fishing
- coastal trade
- smuggling
- the Bristol Channel

Buildings and landscape

- St Peter ad Vincula
- medieval church architecture
- manor houses
- Pack o' Cards Inn
- Community Centre
- Village Hall
- listed buildings
- scheduled monuments
- geology
- dry-stone walls

Community and social history

- Combe Martin Museum
- village organisations
- Buffaloes/R.A.O.B.
- village shops
- Carnival
- Earl of Rone
- community projects
- oral memories
- contemporary newsletters

War and military history

- English Civil War
- silver and wartime finance
- First/Second World War material
- local servicemen
- Pegasus Bridge
- Operation PLUTO
- wartime memories and photographs

Documentary time-slices

One of the archive's most useful features is its collection of documentary snapshots of Combe Martin at particular dates.

These include material associated with:

- 1822 – *Magna Britannia*
- 1831 – Samuel Lewis
- 1831-1845 – documentary and statistical material
- 1744 – ecclesiastical visitation material
- 1878-1879 – White's *Gazetteer*
- 1902 – Kelly's Directory
- 1911 – F. J. Snell's *The Blackmore Country*
- 1928 – a local court case
- 1939-1945 – wartime records and memories
- 1945 – Carnival material
- 1998 – Earl of Rone Festival material
- 2002 – Diamond Jubilee street-party material
- 2025-2026 – contemporary community and heritage records

Together these provide a series of documentary windows through which the development of the village can be studied.

Research papers

The downloadable research library contains specialist studies on subjects including:

- the ownership lineage of the Manor of Combe Martin;
- the Dartington and Barnstaple baronies;
- Martin de Tours and the development of the name Combe Martin;
- the toponymy of Combe Martin;
- Domesday and medieval Combe Martin;
- metalliferous mining;
- mineral wealth;
- ores and smelting;
- industrial topography;
- lime burning and quarrying;
- mills and milling;
- water-powered grist mills;
- geology;
- Combe Martin strawberries heritage;
- the Battle of Cynwit (c. 878 AD)
- Pegasus Bridge;
- notable people connected to Combe Martin;
- St Peter ad Vincula Church Combe Martin history;
- heritage summaries.

The research papers should be regarded as **secondary research and finding aids**, and significant claims should be checked against the primary sources and institutional records identified in the individual papers.

The archival network

The CMVHP archive also acts as a gateway to external collections, including the National Archives, Devon Heritage Centre, Exmoor Historic Environment Records, Combe Martin Museum and other specialist repositories.

This is important because the digital archive should not be understood as replacing the underlying historical record. Its greatest research value is often its ability to point a researcher towards the relevant original document, collection or institution.

Catalogue convention (future)

Each catalogue entry will be assigned a unique record identifier.

For example:

P24 – Manor of Combe Martin: Ownership Lineage (Revised)

Subject: Manorial history

Period: 1086-modern

Geography: Combe Martin

Format: Research PDF

Status: Secondary synthesis

Related material: Tudor Pollard Legacy; Dartington Barony; Domesday Origins; Toponymy

The complete catalogue will in future be maintained separately as a searchable spreadsheet. Researchers will be able to sort the collection by subject, period, place, source type or research status.

Research Caution

This catalogue is itself a finding aid and should not be regarded as an independent authority on the historical claims contained within the underlying resources.

Where the archive reproduces or discusses primary historical records, the original record should be consulted wherever possible.

The catalogue should also be treated as a **living document**. New research papers, articles, photographs, newsletters and community contributions are continuing to be added to the website.

Research note: Catalogue descriptions of sources as “primary” or “secondary” indicate the nature of the material rather than its historical reliability. Researchers are encouraged to consult the original sources and the references provided with individual articles and research papers.

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