

Combe Martin Village History Project

Confirmed Identity of George Ley (1648–1716)

The memorial to George Ley, situated over the liturgical north door in [St Peter ad Vincula Church, Combe Martin](#), clearly commemorates this gentleman of the parish. Ley **died on 12 June 1716, at the age of 68** (*aetatis suae* 68). This aligns precisely with:

- The door being revered as a **symbolic and moral gateway** into sacred space
- Ley's documented activities as a Combe Martin **schoolmaster, magistrate, and benefactor**
- The George Ley Educational Charity is still active in Combe Martin today
- Ley was the architect and the [builder of the Pack o' Cards Inn](#), around 1690
- Ley's symbolic status in Restoration-era Combe Martin as a figure of civic and educational leadership
- For Combe Martin, this era marked a transition from medieval mining and feudal governance, to civic consolidation, educational outreach, and architectural legacy

Memorial Inscription Highlights

"Reader learn by him to dye / That Dying lives eternally..."

The poetic epitaph reflects 17th–18th century Christian beliefs in resurrection and virtue, reinforcing his reputation as a moral and civic exemplar.

Latin Phrase Clarification

- *Aetatis suae* 68 = "in the 68th year of his age"
- Commonly used on gravestones and portraits to denote age at death

Conclusion

This George Ley's memorial confirms his unified legacy as builder, educator, and benefactor—making him a cornerstone of Combe Martin's reputational narrative.

Supporting Evidence

George Ley's legacy is supported by:

- **Archival leases** (property and civic role)
- **Church memorials** (death date and age)
- **Genealogical records** (family continuity)
- **Local history compilations** (civic context)
- **Educational heritage projects** (symbolic framing)
- [aetatis suae - Latin is Simple Online Dictionary](#)

The Memorial to George Ley

Combe Martin St Peter ad Vincula Church

North Devon, United Kingdom



Memorial to Combe Martin Squire George Ley

Memorial Tablet Description

Located in the **north aisle** of *St Peter ad Vincula Church*, Combe Martin, this ornate 18th-century tablet commemorates **George Ley**, gentleman, schoolmaster, magistrate, and benefactor.

Its location over the liturgical north door may have been intended to present George Ley as a **guardian of virtue and protector of the vulnerable**.

The tablet inscription confirms Ley's death on **12 June 1716**, aged 68 (*aetatis suae* 68). It is framed by poetic verses, affirming Christian resurrection and moral virtue.

Memorial Design Features

- **Material:** Carved marble with scrollwork, floral motifs, and a cherubic face
- **Layout:** Central inscription in formal English, flanked by decorative flourishes
- **Iconography:** Classical motifs symbolizing virtue, eternity, and divine judgment
- **Placement:** Mounted above the liturgical north door, signifying civic prominence

Inscription Highlights

"Reader learn by him to dye / That Dying lives eternally..."

This poetic epitaph reflects Restoration-era Christian beliefs and reinforces George Ley's symbolic legacy as a moral exemplar and civic leader.

Historical Significance

- Confirms George Ley as the **builder of the Pack o' Cards Inn** (~1690)
- Validates Ley's role as **schoolmaster, benefactor, and magistrate** in Combe Martin

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