

Combe Martin History Overview

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Note: Interpretive notes reflect archival synthesis and public record. No guarantees are given.

Theme / Category	Event / Detail	Date / Period	Source / Citation	Interpretive Notes	Thematic Tags
Agriculture	Strawberry fields; exports to Wales; local jam production	1800s – WWI – 1960s	Agricultural Heritage	Loamy soil and Clyde Puffer transport enabled regional trade	Horticulture, Local Economy
Architecture	Church of St Peter ad Vincula; Pack o’ Cards Inn	13th century; c. 1690	Architectural Heritage	Listed; Ley family legacy	Religious Heritage, Listed Sites
Cultural Figures	R.D. Blackmore family ties; Marie Corelli, Terry-Thomas, J.M.W. Turner	19th–20th century	Blackmore Country; Famous People	Literary and artistic connections to Combe Martin and surrounding region	Biography, Arts, Cultural Geography
Damien Hirst	Contemporary figure with local ties	Late 20th century – present	Public Record	Noted for residence and influence on regional arts	Contemporary Arts, Biography
Early Settlement	Saxon farming hamlet; land held by Brictric, Edwy. Transferred post-1066	Anglo-Saxon era – 1066	Open Domesday – Combe Martin	Reflects transition from Saxon to Norman landholding under William de Falaise	Feudal Heritage, Landholding Transition

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Folklore & Festivals	Earl of Rone Festival; Guinness World Record street party	Annual (May); June 2002	Festival Overview	Unique to Combe Martin; reinforces local identity and tourism	Folklore, Tourism, Cultural Heritage
Geological Significance	Devonian formations; silver-lead, copper, iron, zinc	419–359 million years ago	Geology Section	SSSI designation; shaped mining and industrial history	Geology, Mining, Scientific Interest
Great Exhibition	Combe Martin silver showcased by Ellis & Son, Exeter	1851	Silver Legacy	Jewel-casket and knitting basket exhibited; national recognition	Decorative Arts, Industrial Exhibition
Hemp & Fulling	Monastic millers through Elizabethan era; hemp production	12th–16th century	Local Hemp	Combe Martin was a prolific hemp producer; used in textiles and rope	Industrial History
Industrial Transition	Shift from mining to horticulture and tourism	1880s onward	Economic History	Post-mining resilience; rise of hospitality and soft-fruit production	Economic Change, Local Industry
Literary Legacy	<i>Lorna Doone</i> (Exmoor); <i>The Mighty Atom</i> (Combe Martin)	19th century	Literary Heritage	Fictional settings rooted in real geography; cultural tourism relevance	Literature, Cultural Geography
Local School Legacy	Combe Martin Free School founded by George Ley	Early 1700s – present	Pack o' Cards Inn History	Community education legacy tied to local squire and philanthropy	Charity, Infrastructure
Manor System Decline	Manor sold by Sir John Pollard to tenants	16th century	Feudal History	End of feudal lordship; rise of individual ownership	Feudalism, Land Reform, Tudor England

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Maritime & Trade	Schooners built by Dovell & Partridge on River Usher	1837–1843	Industrial History	Steam saw mills and tidal launch techniques; regional shipbuilding. legacy	Maritime Industry, Industrial Revolution
Market Gardening	Produce supplied to Ilfracombe hotels and holiday trade	Victorian Era	Agricultural Heritage	Daily cart deliveries; supported resort economy	Hospitality Trade, Local Food Networks
Mining History	Silver mining under Edward I; decline by 1870s	13th–19th century	Magna Britannia (1822)	Royal chartered mines; significant to medieval and early modern economy	Medieval Mining, Royal Economy
Museum & Outreach	Combe Martin Museum and Information Point	Present	Museum Overview	Accessible exhibits; supports heritage events and local engagement	Museum, Community
Prehistory & Raids	Roman mining indications; Battle of Cynwit possibly at Countisbury	AD 50–878	Anglo-Saxon History; Battle of Cynwit	Strategic defence site; Viking raids; possible Roman silver extraction	Roman Britain, Viking Raids, Military History
Smuggling History	Illicit coastal trade during ‘Golden Age of Smuggling’	18th–19th century	Smuggling History	Coastal geography enabled contraband routes and local resistance	Maritime Crime, Customs History
West Challacombe Manor	Fortified medieval manor; false hammer-beam roof dated via dendrochronology	14th–15th century onward	West Challacombe Manor Records	Grade 2 Star listed.	Architectural Heritage, Listed sites.