



Walks



Map



News



Soci

Walk - The Hangman Hills

4.7 miles (7.5 km)

📍 Kiln Car Park in Combe Martin - EX34 0DJ → Kiln Car Park in Combe Martin

🔴 Challenging - Quiet lanes and tracks, and steep, muddy paths that can be very slippery, with substantial ascent and descent

An inspiring walk that amply rewards the effort involved, with far-reaching views over coast and hills, through an area rich in history. A good walk in spring, when primroses and violets surround the new bracken unfurling below bushes covered in blossom. Listen out for warblers, as well as nesting seabirds on the cliffs and ravens on the hillside.

🏠 [Heritage \(/walksdb/tags/heritage/\)](/walksdb/tags/heritage/) ☕ [Cafe \(/walksdb/tags/cafe/\)](/walksdb/tags/cafe/)

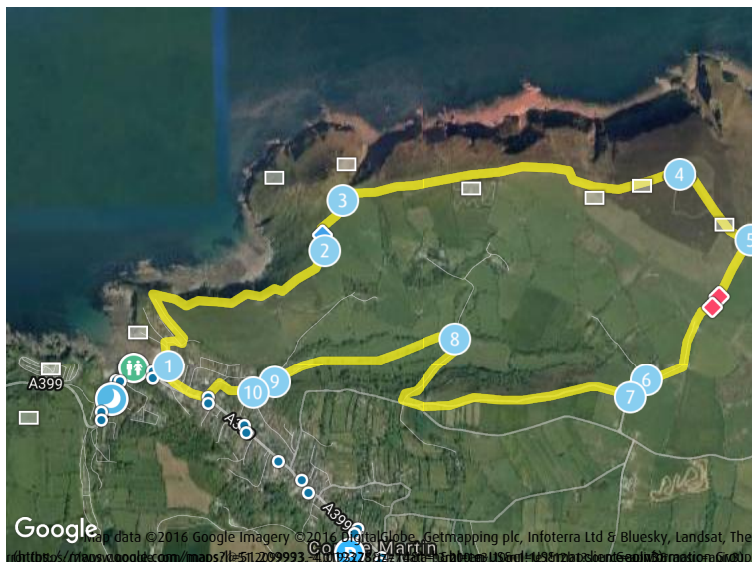
🍺 [Pub \(/walksdb/tags/pub/\)](/walksdb/tags/pub/) 🦋 [Wildlife \(/walksdb/tags/wildlife/\)](/walksdb/tags/wildlife/)

🪨 [Geology \(/walksdb/tags/geology/\)](/walksdb/tags/geology/)

🌙 Sleep

Mellstock House, Combe Martin >

On the Coast Path, we offer boot trays, drying room, laundry service, packed lunches, cosy bar and evening meals. All our rooms are en-suite and have TV/DVD, tea/coffee etc with free WIFI. A free pick up/drop off service is











🟢 ✓ Easy walks

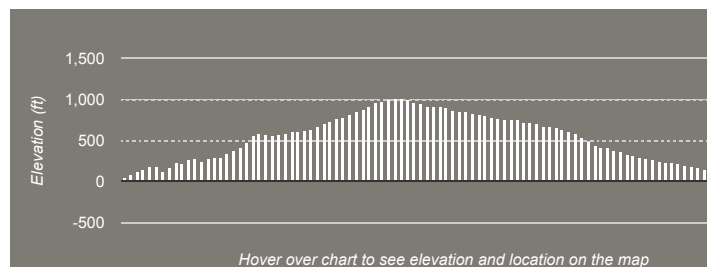
🍴 ✓ Eat & Drink

🟡 ✓ Moderate walks

🌙 ✓ Sleep

📈 Interactive Elevation

-  ✓ Challenging walks
-  ✓ Do
-  ✓ Bus stop
-  ✓ Photographs
-  ✓ Car park
-  ✓ Toilet
-  ✓ Place of interest
-  ✓ Route change



Route Description

- 1 *From the car park take the Coast Path up the steps past the houses and keep climbing with it to the junction of paths above Wild Pear Beach.*

Although it is possible to reach Wild Pear Beach on foot, it is a difficult and dangerous enterprise, leading to the beach being a popular naturist haunt. There was once a lime kiln on the cliffs here, which processed lime for agricultural purposes, and an associated counting house (see the [Little Hangman Walk \(/walksdb/260/\)](/walksdb/260/)). Ships travelled between here and South Wales bringing coal and limestone, and taking away iron and manganese from the nearby mines.


Combe Martin itself was once a busy port, with its share of tales of seafarers and shipwrecks. The most noted visitor from foreign shores was the seventeenth century Earl of Rone (from Tyrone in Ireland), whose ship was said to have been wrecked at nearby Raparee Beach, in Ilfracombe. Allegedly the Earl's vessel was not wrecked at all; but like many another community the folk of Combe Martin didn't let the truth get in the way of a good tale (and a good celebration), choosing instead to honour the event every year with the annual "Hunting of the Earl of Rone".


Taking place on the Spring Bank Holiday, the revelries include the Earl, a hobby hoss, a fool, a donkey, and some grenadiers, accompanied by musicians, drummers and dancers. The practice was abolished in 1837, when the "licentious and drunken behaviour" of the revellers led to one unfortunate merrymaker falling off a wall, but it was revived in 1970 and is now one of the highlights of the North Devon calendar.

- 2 *Ignoring the path to the right above Wild Pear Beach, carry on up the hill towards Little Hangman.*
- 3 *To visit Little Hangman, take the sheep track to the left and return to the original path a little further on. (Be aware that there's plenty more uphill yet though!). Otherwise stay on the path and follow it around the coast above The Rawn's and steeply uphill to Great Hangman.*

On the area to your right here are the remains of a rifle range and target butts here, and what was possibly a building associated with them. They were built sometime after 1887 and are only visible now as a small mound covered in turf and scrub.

 [Print OS \(Ordnance Survey\) M](#)

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Local maps and publications

> [A-Z 1:25,000 map book: North Devon & Somerset](#)
(<http://shop.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/p/405.htm>)

Nearby Walks

[Easy walks](#) (5 wal

[Moderate walks](#) (2 wal

At 1044 feet, or 318 metres, Great Hangman is England's highest sea cliff. From the cairn at the top here are tremendous views over the surrounding countryside, including the rounded humps of the "hogsback cliffs", formed of the red Hangman Grits which were laid down as desert sands here 300 – 400 million years ago and raised high by the movements of the earth beneath.

- 4 *At the cairn, take the path heading downhill to the south east for about 400m.*
- 5 *Turn right onto the bridleway and follow it through the fields to Girt Down Farm.*

The whole of the area enclosed by this walk was once an important mining area. As early as 1292 Combe Martin was defined as a Royal Mine, and a hundred years later King Edward III sent miners from the South Pennines to work here. In the fifteenth century, King Henry V found the mines a valuable resource for the "betterment of his wars in France," and declared that "the battles of Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt were won in the shafts of Combe Martin". A further century later, Henry VIII appointed a notable German mining engineer to oversee operations here and elsewhere in Devon, and gave him a thousand men to work with.

Combe Martin was particularly noted for its silver, but manganese, iron, lead, zinc and copper were also mined around here, and there are remnants of shafts and adits throughout this area, especially around West Challacombe, Girt Down and Knap Down, as well as the remains of an old wheel-house to the south of this walk.

- 6 *Take the track past Girt Down Farm, and then turn right along the track between fields over Knap Down, to where it meets the road at Netherton Cross.*

There are the remains of a mediaeval settlement at Netherton, long since abandoned. There is also an ancient standing stone somewhere on Knap Down, although there is some controversy over where and what it is. It seems to be prehistoric, however, and is known as the Hangman's Stone.

- 7 *Turn right onto the track and follow it past the Netherton ruins, towards East Challacombe Farm.*
- 8 *Cross the stream and, ignoring the lane to East Challacombe Farm, turn sharply left down the path and stay with it beside the stream down onto the edge of the village.*
- 9 *Take the left-hand track downhill into the village towards the main road.*
- 10 *Turn right just before the main road and follow the back street back past the tourist information office to the car park.*

Nearby refreshments

In Combe Martin

Public transport

Challenging walks

(8 wal

Current Conditions

18°

Partly cloudy skies

Wind 22 mph S



Tomorrow

14° - 19°

Cloudy skies

Wind 23 mph S



Next day

14° - 19°

Patchy rain possible


Wind 24 mph WSW




There are regular buses to Combe Martin from Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. For timetable information, zoom in on the interactive map and click on the bus stops, visit Traveline (<http://www.travelinesw.com/>) or phone 0871 200 22 33.


Parking

At the start of the walk


 Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
 The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Europe investing in rural areas
[https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs)



 Coastal Communities Fund
<https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/ccf>



 SOUTH WEST WATER
<http://www.southwestwater.co.uk/>


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