

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SALCOMBE

- The name Salcombe first appears in records in 1244
- Despite being a latecomer in terms of the history books archaeologists have found stone age settlements on the cliffs and evidence of cross channel trading some 3,500 years ago
- Many Salcombe families have settled in the area for centuries
- During the Spanish Armada in the sixteenth century Salcombe residents fitted out 16 ships to assist the English navy
- Fort Charles was the last Royalist stronghold to survive in Devon during the Civil War with the occupants finally surrendering to the Parliamentarians following a siege in 1646
- Salcombe earned its living from the estuary and the sea until about 100 years ago. Fishing, seafaring, boat building, smuggling and piracy were the principal activities
- The first 'holiday home' – The Mould – was built in 1764 by John Hawkins
- In the 1790's Salcombe developed into a ship building and ship owning centre. Early trading routes centred on salt to Newfoundland and salted fish back to Europe. The fruit trade developed later. Speedy schooners were built in order to get perishable cargos of fruit back quickly from Spain and the Azores.
- Competition from other English ports and trades spelt the end of Salcombe's ship building industry in around 1875
- It was around the period of the late nineteenth century that Salcombe started to attract holiday visitors and large houses sprung up at various viewpoints around the town. A station opened at Kingsbridge in 1893 making the town more accessible

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- Salcombe suffered its greatest disaster in 1916 when the town's lifeboat capsized with the loss of 15 lives. The lifeboat had gone to the aid of a schooner which had run aground in a gale
- Salcombe gradually developed as an exclusive holiday resort during the two World Wars and the town began to attract many wealthy retired people. Salcombe Sailing Club was founded in 1922 for 'artisans', while the Yacht Club, opened in the 1890's was exclusively for gentlemen.
- There is still a lot of evidence of World War II around the town. The town was the target of many hit and run bomber raids and many buildings were destroyed and casualties sustained. In 1943 a US naval force arrived. They constructed a slipway at Millbay and a fuel depot at Snapes Point. They sailed for Normandy in 1944 to take part in the Allied assault on enemy occupied Europe.
- Salcombe today survives on its income from holidaymakers. While the resident population may have fallen, the town and the beaches remain popular. Salcombe has developed into a year round resort thanks to its mild climate and the water sports and water based activities are much in demand.

For a more detailed history of Salcombe please refer to the website at www.salcombeinformation.co.uk

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July 2009

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