







Welcome to your souvenir booklet for Tunnels Beaches, Ilfracombe's award-winning beach and must-see tourist attraction!

As bathing and the 'art of swimming' became increasingly popular in Victorian times, local entrepreneurs employed Welsh miners to hand carve six tunnels through the llfracombe hillside, to enable access to a beautifully rugged coastline (four tunnels are still open to the public). Ilfracombe grew from a tiny fishing village to a bustling seaside resort. It could be said that the tunnels are the main reason llfracombe exists!

The coastline and landscape remains virtually unchanged from its Victorian hey day and Tunnels Beaches is still today Ilfracombe's most popular tourist attraction and its main blue flag beach.

Tunnels Beaches lies within a designated 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty', conservation area and voluntary marine conservation area.

Bathing at Ilfracombe

Of the several bathing beaches at Ilfracombe, certainly the most delightful are those at the Tunnels, under the charge of Professor H. Parker. These beaches are most conveniently situated near the centre of town, being approached from the Wilder Road at the bottom of Northfield Road and Torrs Park. The private hot and cold baths, and the model tepid swimming bath, are extremely popular, but the special feature includes the two large pools, one for gentlemen and the other for ladies.

A long subterranean tunnel forms the entrance to the beaches, which are to the rear of the well-known Torrs Walks, protected on the west by Torrs Point, and on the east by a range of rugged rocks. Leaving the tunnel, the entrance to which is from Runnacleave Road, and proceeding to the left, the gentlemen's pool is reached, and here it may be mentioned that the pools or ponds are formed by damming back the water, thus being completely

covered by the sea twice every day, no matter what the state of tide may happen to be – spring or neap – thus always keeping the pools full of clean water.

The attendants on this beach. Tom Rowe and Jack Griffiths, are most obliging and very popular. The ladies' beach is reached by proceeding through three other tunnels, found on the right after leaving the long first one, and here also the pond is similar, though somewhat smaller, to that of the gentlemen's. The attendant, John Griffiths Senior, is quite a character, and is known to frequenters of the beach as "Jack", and frequently provides considerable amusement to the numerous visitors by the various nautical commands which he gives to the horse "Gilpin" (a great favourite with the children, who ride on his back), for Griffiths is an old "salt", who refers to everything in terms connected with the sea. "Gilpin" it should be mentioned, is engaged for the purpose of drawing the bathing machines on the beach.



There is another great attraction to the Tunnels, apart from the bathing, and that is the romantic rock and cliff scenery. Years ago a rickety old bridge used to connect the third and forth tunnels, and under the forth tunnels was a small cave in which it is stated De Tracey took refuge after the murder of Thomas A Becket. In the course of time the cliff slipped down and covered up two of the tunnels for several years.

Now, with common able enterprise, and at great expense, the Ilfracombe Sea Bathing Company, through the efforts of Professor Parker, the lessee, has had the cliffs in the neighbourhood made quite safe, and constructed a sea wall between the third and forth tunnels. The approach to the ladies' beach is now made much easier, donkey chairs and even carriages being able to go right onto the beach, whilst the grandeur of the scenery has been in no way impaired. It is anticipated that the hundreds of picnickers who frequent this favourite spot will this year be greatly increased. The work, which has cost

several hundred pounds, has been carried out by Messrs Britton and Pickett.

A word must also be said for the lessee of the beaches, but, who is there that has paid a visit to Ilfracombe and does not know Professor Parker, the winner of over a hundred and fifty cups and medals? He is well known as the "Amphibious", and his aquatic performances at the Tunnels are the talk of all those who witness them. The tricks he performs are marvellous, whilst his son, "Little Harry", is a wonder. The latter swims with graceful ease, he following in the footsteps of his father, the feats he goes through being really remarkable. The visit to the Tunnels should certainly be included in the programme of every visitor to Ilfracombe.

Ilfracombe Gazette & Observer, Arrival list & Advertiser, 24 July 1903







The tunnels...

hand carved...

In 1823 a team of hundreds of Welsh miners hand carved through the cliffs to allow easy access to Crewkhorne Cove and subsequently built three tidal bathing pools – two allocated for the ladies and one for the gentlemen. The beaches were then renamed 'Tunnels Beaches'.

smugglers...

Prior to the carving of the tunnels, the coves and caves were used extensively by smugglers.

hideout...

De Tracey took refuge within a cave here after the murder of Thomas A Becket.



The total length of the tunnels is over 160 metres

It took 2 years to carve the tunnels

Over 960 cubic metres of rock had to be removed

The miners were paid 8d per day

The pick axe marks are still visible today throughout the walls of the tunnels

The recesses in the first tunnel housed candles and later oil lamps

In all, 6 tunnels were carved, 5 still remain, 4 are used





Bath house...

Local people recognised the need for provision of indoor bathing. Thomas Stabb, a surgeon who had moved from Torquay, began gathering support for the formation of the Ilfracombe Sea Bathing Company.

In 1836 the Ilfracombe Sea Bathing Company erected an elegant new bath-house where both hot and cold sea water baths were available for health and hygiene. Baths were taken within a labyrinth of small enclosures beneath the house.

Sea water was fed from the Tunnels Beaches on the other side of the hill via a wood fuelled boiler that in turn powered a pump. The site of the pump house can still be seen through the tunnels.

Ilfracombe and its baths are ideal for 'invalids, waifs and strays from the heat of India, worn-out clergymen... and to people, whether young or old, whose ailments arise mainly from want of stamina and general lack of tone'.

Ilfracombe: The healthiest of all watering places 1867









Bathing & the pools...

good health...

Bathing facilities were the first essential at any fashionable watering place; so once Ilfracombe began to expand it set out to improve its provision, both for visitors who wished to bathe in the sea and for those who prefer to seek sea-water cures in the comfort of a bath-house

In this period bathing was still regarded as at aid to health rather than as a pleasure, and it was normal for bathing to take place early in the day. At this time bathing was segregated – the ladies had been allocated Wildersmouth beach while the gentlemen (who still bathed nude!) had to take a boat trip to the inaccessible Crewkhorne Cove to retain their modesty.

segregated bathing...

An 1839 guidebook explained the rules: 'The westward part is allotted to gentlemen, while the eastward is by custom left to the ladies and is carefully guarded against intrusion. Machines and bathing women are in attendance and every information respecting the proper time to bathe will be given at the Baths'.

Segregated bathing was tightly controlled; a bugler sat between the ladies' and the gentlemen's pools – if a man attempted to spy on the ladies, the bugler would blow an alarm call and the man would be arrested.

Segregated bathing lasted 82 years! – In 1905 mixed bathing was allowed for the first time





three pools...

Originally there were three pools at Tunnels Beaches, but unfortunately the ravages of winter storms has only allowed the ladies' pool and part of the smallest pool to survive. The remains of the gentlemen's pool can be seen from the gentlemen's beach. The smallest pool can be seen below the boiler house.

The pools were built between the natural curve of the rocks using boulders and lime mortar for the retaining walls.

modesty...

Horse drawn wooden bathing machines were wheeled to the water's edge so that the modesty of the ladies could be maintained.

The beach attire and fashion was somewhat less revealing than today!

facts & figures...

It took hundreds of men 18 months to build the tidal pools

Lime was brought by ship from a kiln sited at a nearby cove

Over 26 million people have visited the pools since they opened in 1824

The pools have seen over 136,000 tides come and go over the years

Every year the main pool is drained by removing a large 'plug' to allow for repairs

Despite being ruined by strong tides and storm damage, we are planning to restore the former Gentlemen's pool to it's former glory... so watch this space!

Curious and philanthropic inventions

Dr Nichols, a Malvern hydropathist, known in the scientific and literary world in both hemispheres, is gazetted as the patentee of some inventions of special interest to our maritime and sea-bathing population.

Wishing to extend the domain of Hydropathy, and use the Ocean for a plunge-bath, "with a wet sheet and a flowing sea," and to promote the decency, comfort, and especially the safety of the invigorating exercises of bathing and swimming, Dr. Nichols has invented the Buoyant Bathing Dress, a neat and elegant water costume for both sexes, which by means of a most ingeniouslycontrived, light, flexible, buoyant, inner lining, enables the wearer to swim with perfect ease, and makes drowning impossible.

The French and Americans have long worn bathing costumes at their fashionable sea-side resorts, and ladies and gentlemen meet in the water for a swim, as at a ball for a dance. Bathing dresses, suitable for swimming, have also been introduced at a few of our English watering places, and their use is likely soon to become as universal as that of the bathing machine invented by a modest and benevolent Quaker of a former generation. Making these dresses buoyant, and thus removing all dread and danger, may induce thousands to enjoy the benefits and pleasure of sea and river bathing.

Dr. Nichols has also invented a Pocket Swimming Life Preserver, which can be carried in a cigar case and weighs less than three ounces, does not interfere with the movements or progress of the swimmer, yet infallibly preserves him from drowning if taken with cramp or otherwise disabled.

His Swan's Foot Propeller, or Aquatic Velocipede is an invention to promote speed as well as safety. It is a scientific adaptation to man of the principle of the webbed feet of amphibious animals, giving him a broader hold upon the water, and a quadrupled power of propulsion.

North Devon Journal 17 June 1869





Using a 'Bathing Machine'...

People would enter the small room of the bathing machine while it was on the dry beach, wearing their street-clothing. In the privacy of the machine they would then change into their bathing suit, placing their street clothes into a raised compartment where the clothing would remain dry.

The compartments of bathing machines had no windows, as their purpose was assurance of privacy. They were notoriously dark inside. A writer in the Manchester Guardian of May 26, 1906 wondered why bathing machines never had a glass skylight in the roof to allow in a bit of light.

The bathing machine would then be wheeled or slid down into the water. The most common forms of bathing machines had large wide wheels and were propelled in and out of the surf by a horse or a pair of horses with a driver. Less common were bathing machines pushed in and out of the water by human power. Some very popular resorts had wooden rails put out into the water for the wheels to roll on;

a few had their bathing machines pulled in and out by attached cables propelled by a steam engine.

Once in the water, the occupants would debark from the machine out the sea side down steps into the water. (Many bathing machines had doors at front and at back; those with only one door would either be backed down into the sea or need to be turned around in the trip). It was considered essential that the water be entered in such a manner that the machine blocked any view of the bather from the shore. Some machines were equipped with a sort of canvas tent which could be lowered from the seaside door, sometimes capable of being lowered to the level of the water, giving the bather an area in the water with greater assurance of privacy.

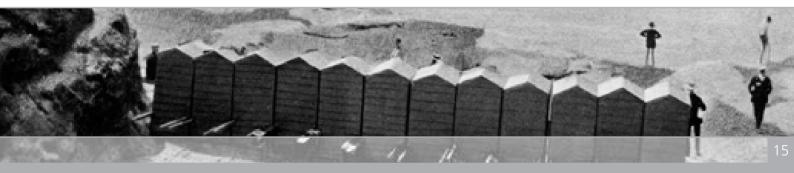
Presumably some such bathing machine arrangements granted enough privacy that bathers could bathe nude, but if this was done it seems not to be generally mentioned in contemporary accounts.



Mention should be made of the practice at some resorts to employ a person called a "dipper". This would be a large strong person of the same sex as the bather who would assist the bather going into and out of the sea. Some dippers were said to rather roughly push the bathers into the water, then yank them out, but this was considered part of the ocean bathing experience.

Bathing machines would often be equipped with a small flag which could be raised by the bather as a signal to the driver that they were ready to return to shore.







Rock pooling...

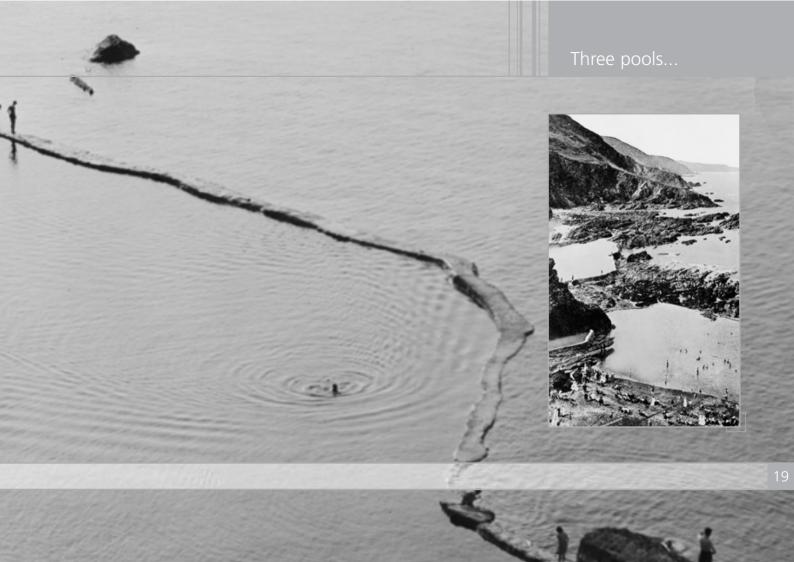


a fashionable pastime...

The rock pools at Tunnels Beaches were made world famous in Victorian times thanks to Philip Henry Gosse, the renowned Victorian biologist and friend of Charles Darwin, who discovered several new species here. In turn, thousands of tourists flocked to the area to enjoy the fashionable pastime that was shell collecting and rock pooling.

The rugged nature of our coastline provides ideal conditions for lots of weird and wonderful creatures. The huge tidal range allows access to very rare species on low tides, including rare sea corals. Our unrivalled rock-pools are teeming with sealife... in fact, Tunnels Beaches was recently voted the 3rd best beach for rock pooling in the UK! By BBC Wildlife Magazine.





Travel...



To understand the vision and risks taken by the local entrepreneurs who created the Tunnels, consider the remoteness of its location for affluent tourists in the 1820s and 1830s: to travel from London to Barnstaple took 28 hours!

The main roads from Bristol were only rock strewn tracks that had to be negotiated by horse drawn carriages. Only later did the Railway expand sufficiently to reach small towns like Ilfracombe.

Prior to the carving of the first tunnel in 1819 there were only five recorded visitors to the town! Ilfracombe was just a small fishing village and tourism was an unknown concept – Tunnels Beaches changed that forever by being the original catalyst in making Ilfracombe a thriving tourist resort known throughout the country.



1896 Hackney carriage & wheel chair fares.



For carrying one person not exceeding 1/2 mile

For every additional person

To Watermouth and back remaining not more than 1 hour (2 1/2 miles each way)

To Lee beach

(3 miles each way)

To Mortehoe Church (7 miles each way)

To Braunton Church (5 1/2 miles each way)

To Combe Martin Church (5 1/2 miles each way)

(All other distances beyond 8 miles to be a matter of private arrangements.)

6d

3d

5/-

6/-

8/-

9/-

7/-



Ilfracombe: the early development of a seaside resort...

1787

1788

1803

1826

A coach service between Barnstaple and Exeter took 12 hours to cover only 39 miles.

Despite the very basic roads, the town started to attract holiday makers.

'Ilfracombe we hear is this season remarkably full of genteel company, being resorted to by numbers of respectable families from most parts of the country. What pleases strangers most is the conveniency of the bathing machines'.

Exeter Flying Post, 1788

Ilfracombe's status as a coastal resort was confirmed by its inclusion in the national 'Guide to All the Watering and Sea Bathing Places'. It noted that of late years it has become a fashionable place of resort in the summer months

The steam packet 'Glamorgan' began regular services between Swansea, Ilfracombe and Bristol. Steamships greatly reduced the cost of travel to the town. In 1832 it cost 15s. 6d. in the best cabin and 8s on deck aboard the George IV paddle steamer from Bristol to Ilfracombe.



1830

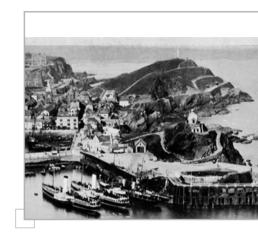
1832

1841

It was now possible to travel from London to Barnstaple in just 28 hours! 'Ilfracombe within a few years past has been greatly enlarged by the addition of numerous commodious lodging houses and elegant terraces. It has become a place of fashionable resort to the affluent and to the valetudinarian'.

North Devon Journal, 1832

The Great Western Railway opened from London to Bristol providing a combined rail and sea link.



Professor Harry Parker... [nationally famous swimmer & escape artist, who performed here during the 1890s]



Ilfracombe Tunnels Baths NEAR TORRS

PROF. H. PARKER

WINNER OF 159 PRIZES,

WHO IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY ALL SWIMMING AUTHORITIES TO BE UNAPPROACHABLE AS AN EXPERT

SWIMMER AND INSTRUCTOR,

Begs to intimate to Ladies and Gentlemen, now that Swimming is acknowledged by the Medical Profession to be a sure means of developing and providing Healthy Physical Exercise, he

Attends the Cunnels Baths, Ilfracombe,

CAS DAILY, -5+0

TO IMPART INSTRUCTIONS IN SWIMMING TO LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

The Professor's Method of Teaching will soon overcome all timidity, and the Pupil become Proficient in a few easy lessons.

The greatest care taken with delicate persons and young children.

DIVING & FANCY SWIMMING TAUGHT.

24

Bathing Costumes made to order or on hire.



Press Opinions.

"Prof. Parker, one of the foremost professors of crnamental awimming, gave an exceedingly neat and entertaining display of his accomplished skill."—Daily Telegraph.

"Prof. Parker, who has just completed his provincial engagements, met with a big ovation, Sportsman.

"... and then good old Parker himself, who, had be been Jonah, would never have run second to any blooming whale."—Sporting Times ("The Pink un")

"The clever Prof. Parker went through wonderful feats of natation, which brought down the house" - Morning Advertiser.

"The manner in which be supports himself in the water was the source of much astonishment, and seemed to suggest the idea that the water was his natural element."—Richmond Times.

"The leading features of the entertainment were the wonderful and truly astounding skill of Prof. Parker.—American Traveller.



Display of Swimming

And FEATS OF NATATION, by

Prof. H. PARKER, F.O.S.



Champion Swimmer of England 1870-71-72.

50 Years a Swimmer.

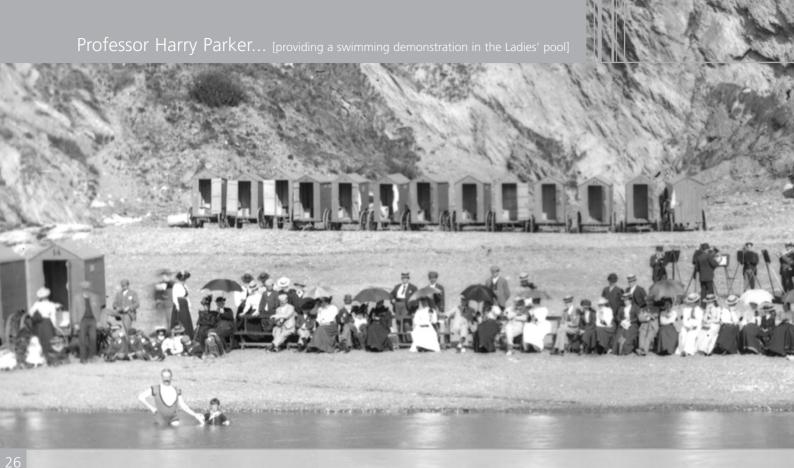
Who has had the honour of appearing before Royalty.

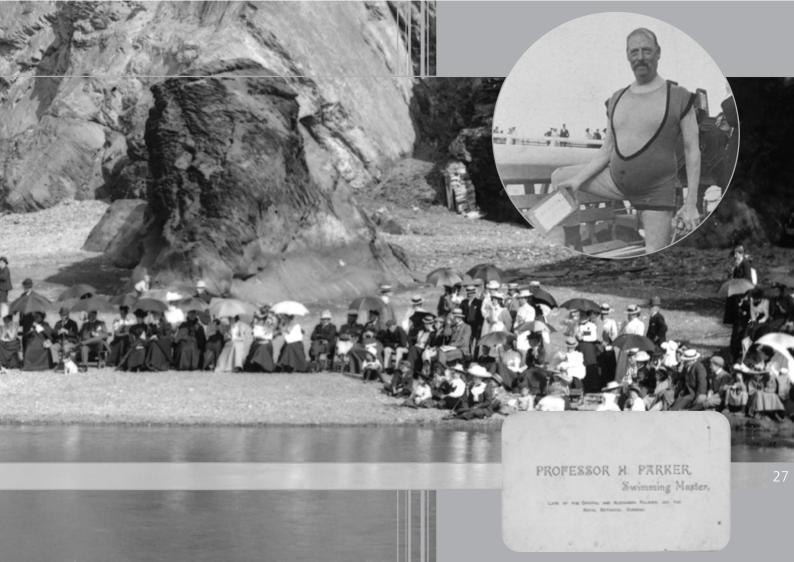


Winner cf

From the Crystal and Alexandra Palaces, and Royal Botanical Gardens, etc.







"England's Greatest Natatorial Artistes."

Vide Press.



No charge is made, but a Collection taken.

2/2

THE

PIER

DAILY.

11/10

For times of Per ormance, see other bills and boards.



2

Don't fail to see these Noted Swimmers!

Don't fail to see these Noted Swimmers!

GAZETTE" OFFICE, ILFRACOMBE.

Press Opinions.

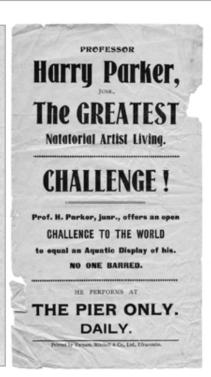
"H. Parker, junr., has inherited all the old cleverness of his father."—Sporting Life.

"... Harry Parker, junr. He is a smart youth, and illustrated several styles of swimming with amazing rapidity, meeting with hearty applause."—News of the World.

"Prof Parker has been most popular for years past in Ilfracombe, but at the present time Harry, junr., is taking a good share of his tather's popularity."—Sportsman.

"There were great festivities down at Ilfracombe in Devon on Wednesday last, when Harry Parker, Junr., was the recipient of a handsome gold medal, subscribed by several visitors and townspeople in recognition of his ability as a natationist.—Sporting Life.

"'Like father, like son,' and so Harry, junr., bids fair to beat Harry, senr.—one of the cleverest professors in swimming of the day."—Ilfracombe Gazette.







England's Greatest Natatorial Artist,

Who is acknowledged by all swimming authorities to be unapproachable as an Expert

SWIMMER & INSTRUCTOR

He begs to intimate to Ladies and Gentlemen that he attends the

Rapparee Bathing Cove Daily From 2 till 4 p.m.

or by appointment, to impart Instructions in Swimming. The Professor's method of teaching will soon overcome all timidity, and the pupil become proficient in a few easy lessons. The greatest care taken with delicate persons and young children.

Terms: Single Lessons - 1/6
Six , - 7/6

If it is worth while Learning to Swim, learn properly

"GATETTE" OF E. ILFRACOMBE



Don't miss seeing PROF. PARKER, Junr.'s

- HANDCUFF ESCAPE FEAT,

Programme.

Part I.

PART I. is taken from Prof. Harry Parker, Junr.'s extensive repertoire and will include-

Diving and coming up feet first.

Standing on head under water. Imitations of Crab. Porpoise, Seal. Octopus, Fish, Torpedo, Ship, Sub-

marine, etc. Revolving, Log Rolling, Water-wheel. Top, Front & Back Somersaults, &c.

Eating, Drinking, Writing, &c., under water.

Hands and Feet Bound and Blindfolded Diving and Swimming. And many other tricks too numerous to mention. New Tricks and Feats always in preparation.

Natatorial Feats

Part II.

CRACK REVOLVER SHOOTING IN WATER.

AND

Lighting a Cigar whilst Swimming Smoking under Water

Drinking Champagne

Shooting the Cork from the Bottle without breaking glass, &c., &c.

Don't miss seeing PROF. PARKER, Junr.'s

OF HANDCUFF ESCAPE FEAT, OF

Acknowledged by Press and all to be

The Most Daring Feat ever attempted in the Sea.

This extra special feat is performed periodically, NOT daily, for which special bills are issued.

Look out for his "X?X" Sensational Feat! DEATH DEFIED!





Etiquette guide for boating...

- 1) Gentlemen unaccustomed to the management of a boat should never venture out with ladies. To do so is foolhardy, if not criminal.
- 2) Great care should be taken not to overload a boat.
- 3) Men who cannot swim should never take ladies upon the water.
- 4) When the gentlemen are going out with the ladies, one of them must step into the boat and help the ladies in and seat them, the other handing them from the shore. When the ladies have comfortably disposed themselves, and not before, the boat may be shoved off.
- Great care must be taken not to splash the ladies, either in first dipping the oars or subsequently.
- 6) Neither should anything be done to cause them fright.
- 7) If a friend is with you, he must be given the preference of seats. You must ask him to row 'stroke', as that is the place of honour.







- 8) If you cannot row, do not pretend you can. Say right out that you can't, and thus settle it, consoling yourself with the pleasant reflection that your confession entitles you to a seat by the side of the ladies and relieves you from the possibility of drowning the whole party.
- 9) Rowing has become a great fad among the ladies in recent years, and it is to be commended as a wholesome and vigorous exercise. However, they must at least have the protection of a gentleman.
- 10) In all cases ladies must wear costumes proper for the exercise, which requires freedom of movement in every part. Corsets should be left at home, and a good pair of stout boots should complete an equipment in which a skirt barely touching the ground, a flannel shirt and a sailor hat are the leading features. Rowing gloves should protect the hands.
- 11) The ordinary rowing costume for gentlemen is white flannel trousers, white rowing jersey and a straw hat. Peajackets are worn when their owners are not absolutely employed in pulling the oar.

Etiquette guide for boys...

- 1) Respect your father and mother and give them their proper titles at all times.
- 2) Learn to respect women. Never speak slightingly of their worth, nor trifle with their name. Learn the lesson now, and you will find its value in your manhood.
- 3) Guard against a profusion of slang that would do credit to a pickpocket.
- 4) Be determined not to use profane expressions in the presence of ladies, children, or ministers, or anywhere else.
- 5) Learn to help yourself occasionally. It is quite possible that you should be able to arrange a necktie, comb your hair, or get articles together for a fresh toilet without calling someone to your assistance. Quite possible and vastly convenient for other members of the household.
- 6) Lower your voice sometimes; everyone is not deaf.
- 7) Remember to remove your hat when you enter a house, private office, hotel elevator (if ladies are present), when you bow to a lady or when you offer to assist a lady.





Etiquette guide for girls...

- Answer your letters soon after they are received, and do try to reply to them with some relation to their contents; a rambling, ill-considered letter is a satire upon your education.
- 2) When you talk, keep your hands still.
- 3) Be natural; a pure diamond is better than a good imitation.
- 4) Get up in time for breakfast.
- 5) Try to be sensible; it is not a particular sign of superiority to talk like a fool.
- 6) Avoid causes of irritation in your family circle; do reflect that home is the place in which to be agreeable.
- 7) Be reticent; the world at large has no interest in your private affairs.



Rock slippage..

This photo shows the ladies' beach and pool prior to clearing of the cliff slippage, construction of the final 2 tunnels, shop site and sea wall. Note the large rock on the beach that was later blasted away, and the smoke from the pump house chimney high on the cliff.





Indecent intruder

Narrow escape

A correspondent complains of an indecent intrusion perpetrated one day last week on the ladies' bathing cove at the Tunnels, by two men, during the prescribed hours.

The persons referred to swam round the points, and not only mounted the rocks but plunged into the basin while the female bathers were engaged in their ablutions.

It would only be necessary for the gentlemen referred to to be named, and they would at once be outed from civilised society. At least the proprietor of the place will know how to deal with trespassers of that kind without any further hint.

North Devon Journal 22 September 1859

If sea bathing has its pleasures, it has also its perils; at least, to those who trust the proverbially fickle elements too confidingly.

A young lady of this town, had a narrow escape from alarming consequences, while enjoying this popular luxury, on Saturday morning last. She had gone for her bath to the ladies' cove, behind the tunnels, and being on familiar terms with the watery god, she dispensed with the attendance given to the less experienced; and, moreover, she could swim a little.

An attempt was made, it would appear, at the latter exercise, and with too great success, for getting into the race of the tide she was borne away from the shore at no inconsiderable rate. On taking an observation of her whereabouts she thought it was high time to retreat, but the strength of the tide forbade. Providentially, a rock was near at hand which she was able to reach, but as it rose almost



perpendicularly from the water, it did not permit the unfortunate swimmer to get upon it.

Finding, happily, some sort of footing below, she was enabled, with the assistance of her hands, to stop herself from being drifted any further, and just to keep her head from total immersion. She was about a hundred yards from the shore, and in no very visible plight.

Her dangerous predicament being observed, Price, the swimming-master, hastened to the rescue, which he effected by those dexterous methods his hand so well knows how to use. On reaching the shore, the exhausted adventurer became insensible, but prompt and kind attentions of the ladies and others on the spot soon resulted in her recovery, so that she was enabled to return to her friends before the news of the danger had reached them.

It is to be hoped that this mishap will net as an admonition to those who venture beyond their

depth – (particularly ladies and tyros in the art of swimming) – not to go at certain places and states of the tide, when they will be in danger of being taken further than they bargain for, and from which they are not able to return without help.

North Devon Journal 11 August 1859





SHARK caught at Ladies' Bathing Cove

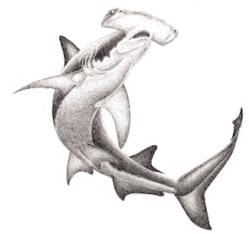
Mr. G. P. O. Richardson, of Ilfracombe, has addressed the following letter to the Times:-

"Will you give me a small space in your widely circulated columns to announce the arrival of a most rare and interesting visitant to our shores in the shape of a very large specimen of the hammer-headed shark (zygena malleus)?

About 1pm., yesterday (July 31) a large object was observed among the rocks near the ladies' bathing cove by the boatmen on the quay head. With great difficulty and some risk it was secured by ropes and triumphantly towed into Ilfracombe harbour; it was then placed in a cart and drawn through the streets. For a small amount I obtained the carcase, and had it placed in the small garden behind our house. On measurement, it was found to be 13ft. 7in. in length, 7ft. 2in. girth behind the pectoral fins, 3ft. 3in. between the orbits of the eyes, which were neatly covered by crustacean parasites. On opening the animal the remains of two thornbacks and a bass were found, together with a number of

intestinal worms of enormous size. There is only one recorded appearance of this remarkable fish on the British Coast, at Caistor, near Yarmouth, in the year 1825. It is figured in Yarrell's British Fishes, p. 223, Part XLiX."

North Devon Journal, 10th July 1865



This remains the only confirmed live sighting of a Hammerhead Shark in British waters!





Reward for saving life

In August last, Miss Ilett Fosse, a young lady of this town, was placed in imminent peril of her life, from being carried out to sea by getting into the race of the tide while bathing.

When she became aware of her danger, not being a sufficiently strong swimmer to re-cross the tide current, she attempted to save herself by clinging to the face of a perpendicular rock.

From this predicament she was rescued by the promptitude and courage of John Price, the swimming master at the Tunnels Bathing Cove, who swam to her assistance with a pole and rope. His conduct on that occasion having won public approbation, a party of gentlemen took care that he should not go without due reward. Besides a pecuniary present, they resolved to represent his praiseworthy conduct to the Royal Humane Society, their sentiments being communicated to the committee by W.E. Langdon, Esq., solicitors.

Last week the following reply was received: "It was resolved unanimously, that the intrepid and humane exertions evinced by John Price, Bath Attendant, on the 6th August 1859 calls forth the admiration of this Committee, and justly entitles him to its sincere thanks, inscribed on parchment, which are hereby awarded."

North Devon Journal 20 October 1859



Death by drowning

On Friday morning last, intelligence was received of a melancholy accident which had happened to Mr Charles William Clarke, of No. 3 Portland Place, Clifton, while bathing in the sea near the Tunnels, at this well-known watering place.

It appears that Mr Clarke came to Ilfracombe upon a visit for the benefit of his health, he having recently suffered from indisposition. On Friday morning, at half-past seven o'clock, the unfortunate gentleman proceeded to Tunnels Beaches, for the purpose of bathing.

The weather was stormy, and there was a heavy sea running; nevertheless, Mr Clarke entered the water. He was not a good swimmer, and the ground swell, or under current, carried him out of his depth. Two lads, at some little distance, observing the imminent peril of the ill-fated bather, endeavoured by every means in their power to render him assistance, but in vain, and in their praiseworthy and gallant attempts they well nigh forfeited their own lives.

The body was picked up a few hours after. An intimation of the distressing occurrence was forthwith communicated to Mr Clarke's friends in Clifton, and his father immediately started for Ilfracombe.

The deceased was bereft of his wife about two years since, and leaves an only child, a girl about five years old, to mourn his sudden death. The sad event has not only cast a gloom on the bereaved family, but has deeply depressed a wide circle of whom the deceased was much respected and by whom his untimely death will be much depleted.

An inquest was held on the body on Saturday, before R. Bremridge, Esq., County Coroner, and a respectable jury. The Coroner having summed up, the Jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned while bathing."

North Devon Journal 11 August 1859





Exciting adventure at Ilfracombe

On Tuesday afternoon just before 4 o'clock four or five children of the town were at the Tunnels and got round on the rocks on the way to Wildersmouth. They had their boots off, and were paddling, not notioning the incoming tide.

When they realised that the water was surrounding them, they began to scream, and drew the attention first of a man employed at the Tunnels, who went through the water, which at first was up to his waist. He laid hold of the first child, which was screaming and kicking in such a way as seriously to interfere with the work of rescue; the man in fact, lost his footing, and both went under, but the child was taken to land successfully. By this time others had come on the spot, among them a plucky lady, who got round and took off another child. From the road above, the children's cries had drawn the attention of the visitors at the Granville, and Mr. J. J. Allen, of Bournemouth, with Messrs. Bradbear, of Southsea, ran down to the Tunnels. Here Mr. Allen at once

took off his coat and vest, and plunged into the sea, which by this time was getting deep; he brought away one of the children on his back, wading through the water nearly up to his neck. Going back again, he took another child round by the rocks a rather longer way, and the whole of the terrified youngsters were safely rescued by the party, most of whom had got a wetting, amid the cheers of the spectators. Mr. Allen and the other two gentlemen then went back to their hotel, and were greeted with a round of cheers from the guests on the balcony.

North Devon Journal 24 August 1899





Improved bathing accommodation

Ladies bathing retreat at Ilfracombe

Several men are at work on the rocks, behind the Tunnels, blasting and clearing away considerable masses of them, for the purpose of extending the space for convenient bathing.

The object desired was facility for reaching the sea with the machines at low time of tide. As the majority of those who visit this place in the summer propose bathing as one of their reasons for going to the sea-side, any addition to the accommodations already existing for that purpose confers a public benefit.

The improvements now going forward at the beach are believed to be at the sole expense of Mr Scamp, the spirited lessee of the Baths. Important additions are also to be made to the Baths themselves.

North Devon Journal 24 February 1859.

The Penny Illustrated Paper, of last Saturday, contained a pretty little drawing of this lovely spot which was accompanied by the following flattering description:

The scenery at Ilfracombe, North Devon, is very different from any that you can see on the southern coast – not more beautiful than Hastings, but more abrupt in its outlines – more bold and striking – and timid tourists who would not like to venture on a voyage of about seven or eight hours in the Bristol Channel may go to Barnstaple by rail, and thence to Ilfracombe by coach.

Unlike Broadstairs, there are no long reaches of sand for children to disport themselves upon, but bathing at Ilfracombe is very fine, far superior to anything we have seen elsewhere. In most of our watering places you have to bathe on the open shore, and consequently have to put up with not a few disadvantages. In the first place, the exposure is not pleasant; secondly, it is very difficult, unless you be





a strong and practiced swimmer, to get into deep and clear water; and, lastly, unless the sea be remarkably calm, the surf which breaks up on an exposed, open shore is very unpleasant.

But at Ilfracombe the bathing places are nearly land locked – deep bays almost surrounded by lofty rocks, and the water is so clear that you may stand immersed to the neck and see the rocky bottom.

The ladies' bathing place is a perfect model. It is a capacious bay, approached only by tunnels through the rocks, at the mouth of which watchful guardians warn off all of the other sex. It may be used when the tide is in, but it is most in favour

when the tide is out. There, protected from the world and cut off from the open sea, or nearly so, it is always calm and unruffled, whilst there is at the same time plenty of space to accommodate any number at a time. The naiads there paddle or dive, or swim, or disport themselves as they please. No mud discolours the water, no nasty waves tumble their dresses; there are no treacherous deeps, and there are no impertinent gazers. In short, it is a model bathing pool, seemingly made by nature for this purpose alone.

North Devon Journal 13 August 1863





HOT AND COLD BATHS,

And Improved Sea Bathing.

MRS. A. SCAMP

RESPECTFULLY requests the attention of the public to this new and commodious establishment, which is situated in the North Fields, and open from six in the morning.

	1st.class.			2nd.class.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Warm Bath		2	6		1	6
or Ten for	1	1	0			
Tepid Bath		2	0		1	6
Cold ditto		1	0			
Warm Shower do.		1	6			
Cold Shower do.		1	0			

Ladies have the superior advantages of sheltered and retired Sea Bathing, at all times of tide, by subscription or otherwise.

GENTLEMEN'S SEA BATHING

JOHN PRICE

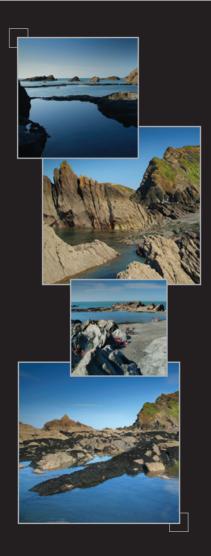
BEGS respectfully to inform Gentlemen desirous of Sea Bathing that he attends on the Beach adjoining the Tunnels, from Six in the morning till sunset. The beach has been lately improved, and is free from all soil.

The art of Swimming taught.











Photography (colour)... By Neville Stanikk

Design... By Zoe McLintock

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