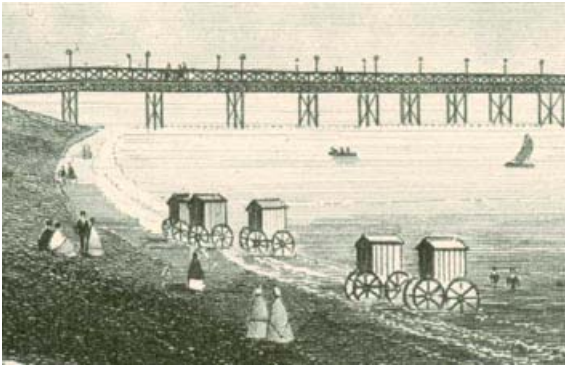


## Seaside 4 - In the water



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1. Bathing machines in the sea at Worthing, 1866



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2. Bathing machines on the beach, Bognor, c1885



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3. Bathing machines in the sea, Bognor, c1910



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4a. The Holloway family with bathing machine, Worthing, c1911  
(see also 4b text below)



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5. Girls paddling on Worthing beach, c1900



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6. Paddling in the sea, Worthing, c1911



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7. Children paddling at Littlehampton, c 1910



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8. Paddling on the beach, Worthing, c1925



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9. Children paddle near a boat on Worthing beach, c1928



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[BOOK\_BOGNORGUIDE\_1950\_08]

10. Boys with a shrimping net, Bognor Regis, c1950



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11. Paddling on a crowded beach,  
Shoreham, c1958



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[BOOK\_BOGNORGUIDE\_1976\_06]

12. Children paddling at Bognor Regis,  
c1975



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13. Bathers at Splash Point, Worthing, 1908

4b.

Source 4b

Extract from the personal unpublished "memoirs" of Florence Alice Holloway (1901-1994)

At the moment it's only "1911" and we went to Worthing for our holiday.....

We booked two bedrooms and a sitting room and the lady of the house cooked and cleaned for us. It was a real holiday for mothers. Apart from looking after the kids of course. We went two or three times to the same small but comfortable house, and the same small comfortable landlady made us welcome.....

One thing we liked, in the mornings a boy would come round before breakfast with a large basket full of hot rolls, which he held up to our bedroom window on a pole. Of course he could have knocked at the door, but how much nicer they tasted coming through the window.

.....

Before I leave the sea for a while, I mustn't forget the bathing machines. If you've never bathed from one you have missed a great experience! A horse was harnessed to the hut which had two large wheels and steps down which one could step straight down into the sea. Inside a narrow bench one side, a small shuttered opening, too high for peeping Toms, some hooks for clothes and towels, a small mirror which advertised Jeyes Fluid, although that advertised itself by the "scent" used to disinfect the interior. If you began to undress as the hut was dragged down the stony beach, you could and did land on the floor. You could hire a swim suit (bathing costume) then, and a towel if you hadn't one. Altogether it was more fun and more comfortable than trying to undress on the beach under a towel. In these days, there aren't so many layers to remove before putting on about six inches of material. Strangely enough the men wore long convict striped costumes with half sleeves and "legs" past the knee. No mixed bathing was allowed at the sea, one section of beach set aside for each sex. I suppose they met in the water, but not many swam then, the ladies played about squealing!

14.

### Mary Wheatland - Bognor's Bathing Woman



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Mary was born in the small village of Aldingbourne in 1835. When she was sixteen she came to Bognor to work as an assistant bathing woman. She worked alongside huge horse-drawn bathing machines and hired out bathing costumes and towels. She also helped people into the water and gave swimming lessons.

Later she owned her own red and yellow striped bathing machines near the pier.



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She had also become a strong swimmer and often swam along the length of the pier and back again. Local people and holiday-makers watched her dive off the end of the pier into the water. She performed handstands in the water, with just her feet waggling in the air.

However, it was Mary's bravery that made her famous. During her time she had saved thirty-four women and men from drowning in the sea.

*"I got many men and women out of the water and brought them round by moving their arms and legs, and giving them brandy."*

Once she saved a group of six girls from deep water by pulling them out one at a time. They rewarded her with £2 and sent her 'a bit of beef at Christmas.' Mary was very modest about her heroic deeds and saw it as just another part of her job.

For all her hard work and bravery, Mary's home life was not easy. Her husband had been poorly for a long time. When he died she was left to raise six children on her own, but she still continued to work. Two of her daughters later worked with her, wringing out wet towels and laying them out on the beach to dry.



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When Mary reached the age of seventy-one she gave up diving off the pier and performing underwater handstands. Suffering with rheumatism, Mary retired aged seventy-four. She remembered,

*"I started bathing people when they were children, and I bathed them when they were grown up and married, and when they were grandmothers and grandfathers."*

Mary was recognised for her bravery and received both a bronze and silver medal from the Royal Humane Society. She died in 1924 at the age of eighty-nine.



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