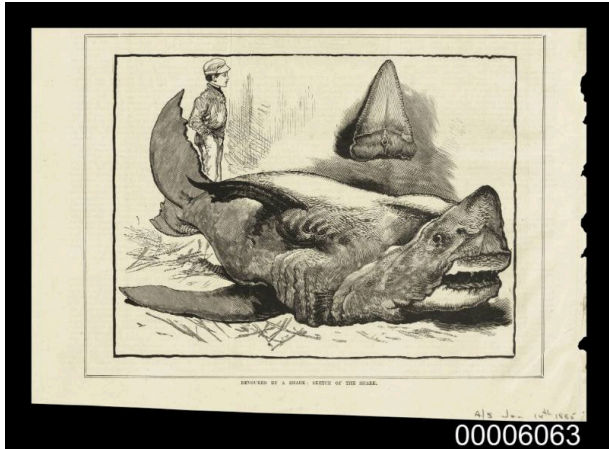


Basic Detail Report



00006063

Title

Devoured by a shark: sketch of the shark

Date

14 January 1885

Primary Maker

Australasian Sketcher

Medium

Paper

Dimensions

Overall: 196 x 284 mm

Name

Engraving

History

On the evening of Saturday 13 December 1884, William and Hugh Browne, sons of Hugh Junor Browne left the Yarra River in a small boat called IOLANTHE. They were accompanied by a man named Murray, employed by Mr Browne. The men intended to fish on Saturday night and then to visit friends in Frankston. There was rough weather on the Saturday and Sunday which caused anxiety for their safety, especially when they failed to return home on Monday as promised. Despite searches by the government vessel DISPATCH, nothing was found of the men or boat until the following Saturday when the body of William Browne was found washed up on the beach at Brighton. The body was badly mutilated and was missing the left arm. The coroner, Mr Chandler, ruled William had drowned. The following week a large shark (pictured) believed to be a great white shark, was caught in Port Phillip Bay and hauled onto Frankston Pier. Once ashore the shark's stomach was cut open and amongst its stomach contents were found 'portions of a coat, vest and trousers and in one of the vest pockets were found a gold watch and silver chain, and in the trousers pocket the sum of 10s in silver, two keys and a pipe. Farther search being made, a human arm and a portion of a skull were found in the stomach.' (The Age, Melbourne. Monday 29 December 1884, page 4). The contents were found to have belonged to Hugh Browne. The shark was later exhibited at Messrs. Hall's stables in Swanston Street. The case of the Browne brothers received further attention as their father was a renowned spiritualist who claimed the boys had appeared to him prior to the catching of the shark. A medium, George Spriggs had claimed that the boys spoke through him telling their parents what had happened and that they were happy in their new spiritual form. The author of 'Sherlock Holmes' Sir Arthur Conan Doyle later wrote about the accident and subsequent apparitions and believed it was solid evidence for the existence of a spiritual realm.