



The picture shows the new Children's Pond on Ventnor's Eastern Esplanade. Essentially it was a water feature for model sailing boats and proved highly popular, among girls as well as boys. The image can be dated to about 1905. It features in the 1914 Ventnor Guide and the legend reveals that it was by Wickenden & Co. The town had a long succession of professional photographers, a very logical outcome of its status as a resort. George Digweed was one of the most well-known, setting up in Ventnor in 1887. Upon his death in 1929, his son Bernard took over the business, by then familiarly known as Digweed & Co.

Robert Wickenden seems to have opened for business at 74 High Street in December 1901, in place of R,E Holden, another photographer and a sometime postcard publisher. Within a few years, though, those premises had been taken by Philip Bagwell and Robert Wickenden had entered into partnership with George Digweed, working from 72A High Street. The partnership did not last long and 72 High Street became Wickenden & Son's Photographic Studio and Picture Post Card Gallery. The business proclaimed a specialism in out-door photography, including beach scenes and excursion groups.

WICKENDEN & Co.,
 31 PIER STREET.
 Newsagents, Stationers and Photographers.
Your Films Developed and Printed
 ON DOUBLE-WEIGHT GLOSSY PAPER,
in 24 Hours.
 CAMERAS, FILMS AND SNAP ALBUMS, ETC.
 ALL KODAK SUPPLIES.

It seems that there was no shortage of custom in the town at this time, for in March 1910, Wickenden had opened a branch establishment at 10 Pier Street. Subsequently, the business was moved wholly to 31 Pier Street, the High Street shop being vacated. The adjacent advert relates to that period.

Percy Wickenden assumed the business following his father's death but the Pier Street premises seemed to have ceased trading early in World War Two and Percy's later years were spent living in Portsmouth. However, he still seems to have had a hand in local photography, for

when the seven brand new pier kiosks came up for their first tender in 1953, Percy Wickenden won the bid for No. 4 (photographic equipment and rights), on a three-year lease. One assumes that he put an employee in to manage the shop, for he remained living in Portsmouth.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

www.ventnorheritage.org.uk / telephone 855407

