



■ HIRSUTES YOU: Ifracombe Arts College staff who grew moustaches and facial hair to raise money for charity. Left to right are Pete Godber, Matt Cooper, Andrew Yearsley, Ed Baker, Toby French, Gavin Denyer, Alastair Newey, Matt Mawson, Shaun Jennison, Rob Whitney, Steve Cronin, James Twomey, James O'Sullivan and Stewart Dine.

## Hair's one way to raise money for charity

STAFF at Ifracombe Arts College have been supporting the 'Movember' initiative, growing moustaches and facial hair to raise awareness and funds for the Pro-

state Cancer charity.

And they raised a massive £700 for the cause.

It included an additional challenge for supporting groups of stu-

dents who raised more than £10 to see their teacher Matt Mawson (pictured centre) dye his moustache a striking shade of bright red.

● Shaun Kennard, who works at Ifracombe's gym, Studio 20, also joined the Movember movement and raised £115 thanks to generous customers.

# Baby sharks are newest arrivals at the aquarium

By KATE HELYER  
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AT Ifracombe Aquarium, baby sharks are being nurtured as the latest new arrivals.

The four dogfish and three baby thornback rays are among the fairly common shark species living around the North Devon coast and aquarium owner Lawrence Raybone said: "Most local people's encounter with these species would be through the discovery of a shark egg case, or 'mermaid's purse,' washed up on their local beach.

"They might also see them at their fishmongers. Rays are commercially caught and eaten as skate. Dogfish are sometimes sold and eaten as rock salmon or huss."

These latest arrivals spent up to ten months in the leathery pods, absorbing all the nutrients inside before finally hatching out and leaving the mermaid's purses to wash up on the shore.

Lawrence said: "We are delighted with these recent arrivals. The parent dogfish have been showing signs of breeding throughout the summer; laying eggs for us to carefully remove, incubate and hatch out.

"It is one of our main aims here, to rear captive bred species, so that we do not have to rely on wild fish for restocking. The dogfish are such a great species to display as the developing embryos can be clearly seen growing in the mermaid's purses.

"Rays are fascinating and beautiful creatures as they seem so vulnerable, hatching at 8cm, but with their inherent ability to camouflage and hunt, they can develop into 1m long predators, effective at taking out shore crabs and small flatfish."

The juvenile sharks are getting some TLC at the aquarium, fed twice daily on fresh worm, prawns, mussels and fish.

Aquarist Chris Beaumont said: "It's very satisfying seeing these fragile fishes feeding well and

thriving under our care.

It's particularly rewarding to see the reaction on visiting children's faces when you explain to them about the baby sharks. They just can't believe that such a small delicate thing can turn into such a large and successful shark."

More baby sharks are expected to hatch in the next two or three weeks and can be seen over the Christmas holidays, with the Aquarium open every day except Christmas Day until February 4.

Lawrence agreed with shark experts that the recent fatal attack in Sharm el Sheik this week was a rare occurrence.

He said that irresponsible disposal of food at sea, or deliberately thrown food to attract the sharks may have drawn sharks closer to shore, especially if their normal fish prey is in short supply because of over-fishing.

He explained that sharks would possibly draw an association between humans and food.

"When discovering humans only, these sharks may still be triggered into preparing for a meal and their feeding instinct can be so strong that they will attack what they have learned is the food source - in this case humans.

"It must be stressed that shark attacks are always extremely rare incidences but always capture our imagination since 'Jaws,' and so hit the headlines.

"Suffice to say I've never known of a shark attack in North Devon...long may that continue!"



■ EMBRYOS of these dogfish can clearly be seen in their egg cases.



■ NEW BABY: Aquarist Chris Beaumont with a one-month old baby ray at Ifracombe Aquarium.

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