

The North Sea

BL

If you were standing on the coast at Whitby, looking out to sea, if you were lucky enough to be there, on a good weather day, you'd see a really blue sea, a sea that perhaps doesn't look full of life. But you'd hear seabirds wheeling around overhead, you know, you'd smell that salty sea air. If you kind of looked down from your vantage point, you can see the sea crashing on the rocks below. It's an incredibly special place.

MV

The beauty of living by the sea is that you can always hear the wind and the waves and the oyster catchers and the seagulls. And in the Summer obviously that changes when we get the noise of the fairground, and people having candy floss and fish and chips and kids screaming and the donkeys braying.

SF

It's really soothing and relaxing. It's a nice noise to go to sleep with.

WC

When we first open the curtains in the morning, it's there you might sometimes like what you see. It's a beautiful, sunny flat morning. It's a lovely sunrise, or you might not like it when there's an easterly or Northeasterly gale and huge seas bashing across the end of the pier and off the seawall.

EB

I actually find it peaceful when it's rough, because the waves, like, crash a lot. Do you like it when it's rough?

LB

I like looking at the sea. And I don't mind being on the sea. I certainly don't like being in it. You lot are more adventurous than me there.

AB

The seaside's always been a big part of my life. I just love how it's such a, like, powerful force.

DB

And we kind of look across it with a little bit of wonder. And we think about a kind of a romanticised vision of the sea and what might be coming over the horizon. I think in the past the sea has been a place of real danger, of course of connectivity as well. But it's often been where threats have come from.

RF

At times I think we turn our backs on the sea as a population in the UK, we think we're connected as an island nation. I don't think we are. I don't think we think enough about the sea.

WC

Throughout my life I've worked on and under the sea. I started off as a fisherman - from Scarborough we worked all over the North Sea in whitefish trawlers mainly but also some potting vessels, crab potting and lobster potting.

TR

I just followed my Dad. But it was just a formality of helping your dad after school and learning how to make crab pots at an early age 12,13 years old. Eventually I left school and went with my Dad in a cobble, which is a 30-foot open boat. It was very hard. Summer months were spent with lobsters and crabs in the pots and winter times we would be long lining for Cod and Haddock.

WC

The sea is everything to us. It provides for us by allowing people to catch fish from it. It allows people in the leisure industry to sail on it and row on it and take passengers to sea, it's got so much life on and under the sea.

SC

The reason I moved back up here was because of the surf. So all my friends down in Cornwall laughed at me because there's a famous place for surfing, I visited family up here, and I saw how good the surf was now moved up and they just couldn't believe I'd want to leave Newquay to come to Yorkshire and go surfing instead.

RF

Off the coast here in front of us and off the coast of Yorkshire at times we will have a lot of sediments from the land or from coastal erosion, sand and silt and mud and clay particles in the water. And they change the colour of the water so that we have a shift to greener and browner wavelengths. So the surface of the water looks different depending on the amount of sediments that are in there. And then we have the living component of the seawater, the phytoplankton, the grass, the plants of the sea, and they're absorbing the sunlight. And so we would perceive a greenish shift or in a very dense situation, when a lot of phytoplankton the water might actually look dark. And we'd sometimes get that when there's a very strong what we call a bloom of plankton in the waters of the North Sea.

BL

When you go diving, you're completely encompassed by your environment, there's no distractions really, from elsewhere, your senses are completely overwhelmed by that marine environment. So you know that feeling of yes, the cold in the first instance, but the different things that you're seeing that is so different from land. The peace, to be honest, is a huge attraction.

MN

You'll be diving down the line and it'll be going down and water will be getting that bit darker, you still keep going down the line and start losing a bit of light and then just start seeing a faint glimmer of some

of the marine life on the wreck. And you know, the wreck just appears out of the gloom. I still get that same buzz of excitement and to see the wreck just appear before me.

SC

You go in the water once you'll do it again, that's the simple thing about it. Especially the moment because life on land becomes so tricky. What I say to people, the second you put your foot in the water, this is surfing, paddle boarding, swimming, all your problems stay on land. Just get the water around you and you can leave the harder aspects of your life behind. And you can just go enjoy being somewhere different. It's very relaxing. It's very, very good for your mental state.

KA

I'm like a child every time I'm there, I go as much as I possibly can. It's just so relaxing.

EF

I've lived for years just down the street from the sea. So the idea of being away from it is so scary. I couldn't imagine going anywhere else where I couldn't see the sea.