



Durdle Door

The idea is to celebrate the elemental power of the beach and its profound effect on people who enjoy being where the air, land and sea meet. In the narrative interviews on the site, you can see and hear people represent their emotions, perceptions and recollections, all drawn out by the enhancing effect of the beach. Essentially manonabeach is a construct, a passive Everyman, whose role is to bring qualitative findings directly to you, letting you draw your own conclusions from them. The reason for keeping manonabeach anonymous is so viewers aren't distracted by the presence of a personality.

When you visit a lot of beaches, as I have done, it soon becomes apparent that there are regional characteristics that distinguish them and may inform the attraction in each place - such as the long granite headlands of Cornwall or the big skies and bird life of Norfolk and Suffolk. I learnt on my visits to Dorset that there are a wide variety of beach goers. Walking along to Sandbanks from Bournemouth Central beach, past the

What does the beach mean to you?

There have been 469 different responses to this question, in more than 650 interviews. Overall, the top five responses are:

1. Childhood
2. Beauty
3. Dog walking
4. Family
5. Livelihood

The findings break down into six categories, each with its own top five:

Livelihoods and occupations

1. Livelihood
2. Routine
3. History
4. Economic benefit
5. Economic pressure

Friends and family

1. Childhood
2. Family
3. All generations
4. Holiday
5. Visitors/tourists

Sensory

1. Beauty



Admiring the view, Golden Cap



Aerial view of Seatown (taken from a paraglider)

2. Peaceful/calm
3. Freedom
4. Relaxing/chilled out
5. Wide open spaces

Emotional and spiritual

1. Everything
2. Memories

3. I love it
4. The pull of all beaches
5. Being near the water / the sea

Nature

1. Ever changing
2. The sea
3. Wildlife

4. Seasonal changes
5. Nature

Occupations and activities

1. Dog walking
2. Fishing
3. Surfing
4. Swimming
5. Walking

wooded chines early in the morning, mingling with local walkers, runners and yoga practitioners, was a delight. I was impressed by how the affluence of Sandbanks and Poole Harbour sits so comfortably next to the natural beauty of

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the beaches on offer, unspoilt by beach vendors and concessions. The counterpoint to that was the stunning scenery at Durdle Door, Lulworth Cove and Chesil Beach.

My recent spring re-visit coincided with the giant landslip between Lulworth Cove

and Durdle Door, the results of which you can see on my scene-setting film at the latter beach. At Chesil I learnt how smugglers could judge where they were by the size of the pebbles - longshore drift neatly grades them by size along the 18 mile beach. It was breathtaking to stand on Southbourne Beach and see the evening light set on the Needles, clear vivid white shapes known locally as the polar bear and her cubs. There are so many distinctive memories from the Dorset trip, from the Portland stone Olympic rings to the towering East Cliff at West Bay.

The beach is a wonderful place for us all to enjoy. It's ever changing nature, whether on a daily, tidal or seasonal basis guarantees an element of surprise in any beach visit. You just don't know what and who you'll meet, which means that you'll always have a different answer to the manonabeach question: "What does the beach mean to you...?" ■

To answer that question and share your beach thoughts visit manonabeach.com