**A BEACH**

**READING**

Imagine a beach; a quiet place, with only the noise of the sea and the gulls in the background. There are boats floating near the shore and a few people swimming in the water next to them. It’s a hot day, and there are some people lying on the sand enjoying the sunshine and slowly going brown. There are no shops, no people making noises, no loud music, everything is peaceful. There is just the sea, the sun, and the beach; a little paradise.

### Where is it?

The beach is on the south coast of Scotland, near a little town called Gatehouse of Fleet in the county of Dumfries and Galloway. 22 years ago my family and I found this place for the first time and we have never really left it. Every year in the summer while other people go on holiday to foreign countries and exotic places, we go to our private paradise and relax. There is a little campsite with tents and caravans next to the beach, and this becomes our home for one month every year.

### Growing up

For a child a beach is a wonderful place. Here I found lots of space to run and play on the sand or to swim in the water. Being a campsite there were always lots of other families with children to play with. Another of my favourite activities was climbing on the rocks and cliffs around the beach. Rock pools were very educational places where I used to study the little fish and sea animals. Silence was also important; at school I was always surrounded by people and noise but the beach gave me the chance to be on my own and think, or read, away from anyone else.

### Storms

Although the sea can be beautiful, this beach is sometimes a dangerous place to be. When the weather is bad there are often storms with strong winds. When this happens the waves can get up to 2-3 metres high – definitely not weather for swimming. Every year some of the boats anchored on the beach are lost because the sea is so rough. I remember holding down our tent to stop the wind blowing it away on many occasions! However, if the waves weren’t too high all the children (and some adults) used to go swimming in life jackets, as it was very exciting.

### An interesting hobby

Sailing is a very serious activity in the UK, and this beach is no different. There are large racing boats for three or more people, smaller boats (such as the Topper) for just one or two people, fishing boats and windsurfers. In fact people on this beach are willing to try any type of water-sport; water skiing, speed boating, even the recent sport of sail surfing is becoming popular. Over the years my family has had 4 different boats, from a small Topper to a large Caprice for racing. We have sailed, raced, and fished off the boats, and have even capsized in bad weather a few times.

### Surroundings

If this beach had been next to a town or near a popular tourist area I don’t think we would have continued going there. But its location is very beautiful indeed. It’s in the middle of green countryside with many different types of plants and flowers, and in the background the hills of Galloway can be seen. Lots of photographers and artists come to the area (also known as the Solway) because they can capture such beautiful scenery.

### A refuge

Even after 22 years, the beach is still a sanctuary for me. It’s a place away from the rest of the world where I can forget about life’s problems, and just relax. In today’s modern, busy world, everyone should have a place like this.

### Glossary

**anchor (v.):**to make something or someone stay in one position by fastening them firmly.

**campsite (n.):** a piece of land where people on holiday can camp, usually with toilets and places for washing.

**capsize (v.):**to (cause a boat or ship to) turn upside down accidentally while on water.

**capture (v.):** to record or take a picture of something using a camera.

**caravan (n.):** a wheeled vehicle for living or travelling in, especially for holidays, which contains beds and cooking equipment and can be pulled by a car.

**cliff (n.):**a high area of rock with a very steep side, often on a coast.

**float (v.):**to stay on the surface of a liquid and not sink.

**gulls (n.):** a sea bird with black and white or grey and white feathers.

**life jacket (n.):**a piece of equipment, like a jacket without sleeves, which is filled with air or light material and designed to help someone float if they fall into water.

**paradise (n.):**a place or condition of great happiness where everything is exactly as you would like it to be.

**refuge (n.):** (a place which gives) protection or shelter from danger, trouble, unhappiness, etc.

**rock pool (n.):**a small area of sea water contained by the rocks around it.

**sanctuary (n.):** protection or a safe place.

**tent (n.):** a shelter made of cloth, which you can fold up and carry with you and which is supported by poles and ropes.

**water-sport (n.):** sports which take place on or in water