

Johnny Johnston MBE

The sea has played a major part in my life for as far back as I can remember and has been the ONLY means of my finding an occupation that was always a challenge that has kept me captivated when I really felt it was all worthwhile.

I left school at 15 years old with no formal qualifications except for the school of life that I found in the rock pools and beaches that was my playground from as early as I could walk. By the time I was eleven years old I would be running home from school, changing my school clothes and running along to the harbour at Port Seton and becoming the message boy for a fishing boat called PROVIDENT and there I began my sea training. Even going to sea on a daily basis in the school holidays and seeing what a fisherman's life was all about, I WAS HOOKED.

I left Preston Lodge school and was persuaded to go to Leith Nautical college for 13 weeks receiving training as galley boy in the MERCHANT NAVY, which meant that before I was 16 years old I had been in Holland, France, Belgium, Germany, and lastly South Africa, where the company that owned the ship flew the crew home leaving the officers aboard with an African crew trading round the African coast.

I came home on leave and was asked by a local skipper if I would help him out as he was a man short, which I did and decided to become a full time fisherman, sticking in and learning the ropes and the skills necessary to climb the ladder of success and to cut a long story short I had found my niche in life at sea.

I found working very close to nature so very interesting and seeing at first hand creation, the changing seasons and all the mysteries of life revealed in such an amazing way it really was new every morning.

In the late 70s things were not looking rosy for the Scottish inshore fishing industry, fuel prices were going through the roof, fish prices were on the floor, and the threat of the EU was staring the industry in the face that I decided to tie the fishing boat I owned up and sell her and eventually I gained the role of Harbourmaster at Eyemouth, a job that I gave my all too and in doing so spoke to many schoolchildren from as far afield as Edinburgh, showing them round the harbour and explained the very many peculiarities among the many species that would land on the deck of the many fishing boats that operated out of Eyemouth.

I feel that by putting my name forward as a Trustee I can bring some of the many aspects of life in the rock pools, in the lobster pots, in the many simple yet so profound species around this unique part of South East Scotland, and I sincerely feel there is a part that I could play around the tables that need to be sat around to be absolutely sure that these waters are given the care and attention that is so important to keep this natural food chain unbroken. Although I am now in my 80s there is a part for me to play if the Trust so desire.