

Whelk Stalls by Mrs McD of Scarborough

Mrs McD's aunt had a whelk stall on Foreshore Road in South Bay, Scarborough, one of many along that frontage. Despite the competition, there is a strong bond between the owners of these given their connection to Scarborough's fishing trade. Many of the fishing boat owners like Mick Grimes had their own stalls and would stock them from their own catch. Others would buy in the stock commercially. Most of these stalls are operated by the women in the family and some would take their child or children with them because the income would not fund childcare. The stalls sold and still sell crab, whelks, prawns, jellied eels lobster and with crab being the most popular. A lot of custom in the summer comes from those enjoying a day on the beach so that there is a slight advantage in being located.

Mrs McD remembers being minded at her aunt's stall when young. She would not be seen above the counter and would be told to be quiet when customers were being served. She remembers being teased by her aunt who would sometimes place a live lobster on a shelf below the counter, in theory to keep her quiet but in truth she was terrified and had to stop herself from screaming.

She also remembers often accompanying her uncle as he dug for whelks on the beach at south bay. He would find them at low tide just a little bit into the water.