

When you're by the sea, it's your own time': why moving to the coast did wonders for my mental health. From The Guardian, shortened by Kontakt Centrum Języków Obcych.

<https://www.theguardian.com/see-if-its-time-to-sell/2021/jul/01/when-youre-by-the-sea-its-your-own-time-why-moving-to-the-coast-did-wonders-for-my-mental-health>

A well-loved garden and the promise of daily dog walks on the beach lured Ian Roberts and his husband to their **period property** on the south-east coast of England.

“I grew up five minutes from Formby, a National Trust beach in the north-west of England. It had amazing, huge **dunes** and, as a kid, we'd all go sand sledging. I've always had the feeling that going to the beach is a form of escape. When you're by the sea, it's your own time. I have a feeling of coming home when I'm near the coast.

Before I met my husband, I'd already moved from inner London out to Eltham, a suburb in the south-east of the city. I wanted fresh air and greenery, while still being in the capital. But then when I met Johnny, 11 years ago, we'd go away for weekends by the sea and we started house hunting when we hadn't been together that long.

I think we looked at more than 100 houses between 2010 and 2012, all in either Hastings or Rye. We hadn't really considered the villages in between the two towns, as I think we just assumed they were out of our price bracket. At the time we were looking, you couldn't get an instant **estimate** for your home online like you can now with My Home on Zoopla, which helps track property prices in an area and estimates of homes that aren't on the market. It's a lot easier to see what you can **afford** now.

I was looking for a period house, although that really didn't mean it had to be grand. And Johnny wanted a garden, one that wasn't **overlooked**. One day we had a call from an estate agent saying, there's a house in this village, a **coastal** farming community, in between Hastings and Rye. You could get to the beach in 10 minutes. It was on a road we'd never driven down. It had been the gatekeeper's cottage for a country estate.

I loved this house. I couldn't shut up about it and I lost interest in seeing any others. We thought it would be OK to wait, but then when I was showing pictures to my sister, I saw that the estate agent's site had it listed as sold. I felt sick to my stomach. That was in the summer. Johnny and I got married – well, it was a civil partnership back then – in September, and as we were driving down to the wedding the agent phoned and said it was back on the market. I asked if they could stop anyone else from looking at it until we'd had our four-day honeymoon.

We found out the lovely story of the lady and gentleman who had lived here before us. He was a well known local artist and she was a musician and a librarian. They were big plant hunters, and had modelled the garden in the old fashioned English style, but using lots of Alpines as well: not really Johnny's **cup of tea**, but he loved the fact they were **green-thumbed**.

So it was decided: this was where we wanted to live, and selling up in Eltham would **enable** us to move into our dream cottage.

Since we relocated here, Johnny has left the job he hated in financial recruitment, got on to a training scheme with Kew Gardens and set up a **horticultural** design business. Now he's the head gardener of Fairlight Hall, a big local country house. My career change hasn't been so drastic, though my view has changed dramatically. I worked in arts PR and used to look at the

shoppers on Carnaby Street out of my window; from my office in the garden now, I look at the cows in the field next door. People assume creative **opportunities** are all in London, but I've found really interesting work locally. I work with the Hastings Contemporary gallery and I'm the managing director of the Hastings International Piano festival. This is an area where people make things happen.

We have realised, living here, how important **surroundings** are, and we feel **enormous gratitude** for being able to call such a beautiful place home. We have two Old English sheepdogs now, and some peacocks. There are actually some more peacock eggs in an incubator in the boot room. I'm still surprised I have a room called a boot room.

I think we both recognise that this move was very good for our mental health – something I'm reminded of every day when I open the curtains or head out to the beach with the dogs. I can't quite believe how lucky I am. I live here. This is home and I'm doing it with someone I really want to spend time with."

Match the words with the correct definitions:

1. to overlook	A. a hill of sand near a beach or in a desert
2. green-thumbed	B. to be able to buy or do something because you have enough money or time
3. dune	C. positioned on, or relating to the coast
4. period property	D. it is not the type of thing that you like
5. opportunity	E. to provide a view of, especially from above
6. to afford	F. a building that was constructed before the 1st World War
7. to estimate	G. extremely large
8. coastal	H. that is everywhere around something
9. horticultural	I. to guess or calculate the cost, size, value, etc. of something
10. surrounding	J. having the ability to make plants grow
11. enormous	K. relating to the study or activity of growing garden plants
12. not be sb's cup of tea	L. an occasion or situation that makes it possible to do something that you want to do or have to do, or the possibility of doing something

Key:

1E; 2J; 3A; 4F; 5L; 6B; 7I; 8C; 9K; 10H; 11G; 12D