



COLD WATER PIONEER, IAN MCKAY, IN SCOTLAND.

SURE IS FROSTY

AWAY FROM THE BLUE SKIES AND GOLDEN SANDS, THERE IS A VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF HARDY WAVERIDERS BRAVING THE COLD.

TEXT LIZ SEABROOK + PHOTOGRAPHY KEVIN RANKIN

“Some of the surf magazine [writers] drop in [on a surf spot] for a week during the best swell, score amazing waves, [...] take photographs that look absolutely stunning and then jet off again,” muses surf writer Chris Nelson. “They don’t tell you the story of what it’s like to be a surfer year round.”

Growing up on a strict diet of glacial breaks in the North Sea near his native Yorkshire, the thirty-something knows exactly how tough winter can be for a cold water surfer. Three years ago, Nelson embarked on a soul-searching adventure to find like-minded waveriders across the world and immortalise them in

a book entitled *Cold Water Souls*.

“The book is about [local] people and their personal stories,” explains Chris, probably for the thousandth time in the project’s lifespan. It’s the same explanation he gave his home crew in Saltburn-By-Sea, as well as “the very first guy who picked up a board” in Hokkaido, Japan, and the sometimes overly protective locals in the north east of the USA - all of whom make an appearance in this frozen tome.

The thorough timeline of *Cold Water Souls* begins with pioneers “surfing in really leaky old dive suits” and “sitting in the bath to defrost” in Nova Scotia

in 1962, and ends with Iceland’s embryonic surf community today.

But after years of visiting the most beautiful, remote and frigid locations in the world, the soul of this cold water enthusiast remains close to home. “The north shore of Scotland [is my favourite place to surf],” says Nelson. “You can just travel up to the Highlands through the mountains, drop down to the coast and surf world-class reef breaks on perfect beaches... That’s always going to be a strong pull.” **D**

COLD WATER SOULS: IN SEARCH OF SURFING’S COLD WATER PIONEERS IS OUT NOW ON FOOTPRINT TRAVEL GUIDES.