

Union Quay Bites

The new monthly newsletter from Union Quay Dental

FEBRUARY 2026

This month:
A life lived on the Fish Quay
Nutrition tips to support kids' teeth
Update on our refurbishment



We're backing
North Shields
UK Town of
Culture 2028



Welcome to Union Quay Bites

The weather is getting brighter, the days are longer and we're enjoying some lovely sunrises from the windows of our newly refurbished treatment rooms at Union Quay Dental.

This month we're celebrating our location in the heart of North Shields Fish Quay, with a focus on one of our patients, Thomas Cottingham. Thomas worked for 50 years on the Fish Quay and frequently visited the Irvin Building.

We're also bringing you the second part of our 'Small teeth: Smart habits' feature. This part is focused on sugar in children's diet and how it affects their teeth. We've got some practical tips to help you along the way.

Is the spring bringing you out of hibernation and you're thinking of taking steps to improve your smile? Book an appointment with our Treatment Coordinator to find out what plan can give you that confidence boost in 2026.

Enjoy this edition of Union Quay Bites!



UNION QUAY
DENTAL

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Practice News

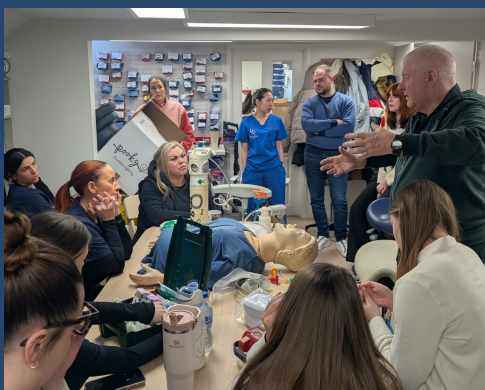
Refurbishment Progress

Work is well underway on the next phase of our refurbishment and expansion, with two new surgeries being added and upgraded facilities coming soon.

Here are a few snaps from behind the scenes, we can't wait to reveal the finished project.



Keeping skills sharp



This month the team completed our first aid refresher course to make sure we're prepared to keep you safe and supported every step of the way. It's great to get hands-on with the equipment and stay up to date with the latest techniques.



Small teeth, smart habits: A parent's guide to healthy teeth

Fact: High sugar intake is the biggest cause of tooth decay in children in the UK.

Research has shown that in the UK we eat too many 'free sugars'.

'Free sugars' include all sugars added to foods and drinks by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, as well as sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, smoothies and fruit juices.

This might surprise you... also included as free sugars are the following: fruit and vegetable juices, smoothies, and all sugars naturally present in dairy-alternative drinks such as soya, rice, oat and nut-based drinks. It does not include sugars found naturally in whole fresh fruit and vegetables, or those naturally present in milk and milk products.



The main sources of free sugars consumed by children are:

- Soft drinks and fruit drinks
- Cereal and cereal products
- Sugar, preserves and confectionery



The low-down on sugar

Even as dentists, we know how hard it is to resist sweet treats. Reducing sugar is key, but if your little ones do love to eat it, timing is everything!

- Don't eat sweets between meals. All food and drinks with sugar should ideally be eaten at mealtimes, when there is more saliva in the mouth to wash away sugar and to neutralise acids.
- Avoid sugar-containing foods and drinks at bedtime, especially in children, because saliva flow (important for protecting teeth) drops overnight.

Practical tips:

- Only give sweet foods and dried fruit at mealtimes.
- Encourage water or milk instead of sugary drinks.
- Ask for sugar-free medicines for children when available.
- Try to avoid juice outside meals, especially as a “between-meal” drink.

Age	Recommended amount per day
4- 6 years	No more than 19 grams of sugar, equivalent to approximately 5 cubes
7-10 years	No more than 24 grams of sugar, equivalent to approximately 6 cubes
11 years +	No more than 30 grams of sugar, equivalent to approximately 7 cubes
Guidance for babies	<p>Breastfeeding is linked to lower tooth decay risk. For infants being bottle-fed: only give infant formula or breast milk - never add sugar, honey, or other sugary substances.</p> <p>From around 6 months, introduce a variety of solid foods; do not add sugar to foods or drinks.</p> <p>From 6 months, encourage drinking from a free-flow cup and discourage bottle feeding after age 1.</p>

Regular visits to the dentist help keep your children's teeth healthy. Book your appointment via our [website](#) or speak to reception on 0191 2596506.

Business of the Month

Seaview Fisheries

Anthony Asiamah's family has run Seaview Fisheries since 1987, and he's recently taken over the business from his parents. Anthony loves coming to work each day, talking to customers, many of whom have become friends, and working with really good local produce.

It's been a challenging winter for local fisherman, with stormy weather making for difficult fishing conditions, but Seaview always endeavour to use locally caught fish and shellfish. Anthony's top tips for the best local seafood include codlings, monkfish, halibut and langoustines.

Just along the street from the practice, why not use your next check-up as an excuse for a wander along the Fish Quay and choose something local and delicious from Seaview for tea.



Seaview Fisheries
12 Union Quay, North Shields.
Open Monday - Saturday
08:00 - 15:00

A life on the Fish Quay

Union Quay Dental patient Thomas Cottingham has spent his life working on the Fish Quay. He tells us about Richard Irvin's legacy and why North Shields was nicknamed 'The Silver City'.



Thomas Cottingham was born on Hudson Street, just above the Fish Quay, in 1955. "I loved it you know, coming down here every day. Even when I was just 4 or 5 years old, my father would bring me down to be with the fishermen and show me different things. I knew that was what I wanted to be." An accident as a child meant Thomas was unable to follow in his father's footsteps and go out to sea, but he chose the next best thing, working on the Fish Quay filleting fish.

Aged 15 he started working for MacConachy's. Starting at 5am, he would fillet fish until midday, working outdoors in rain, snow and hail. So much fish was coming into the port that he could always find more casual work with other businesses in the afternoons. During his 52 year career, he ran his own business, and his last job was at Seaview Fisheries, still trading just along the road from Union Quay. "I've never regretted it, you know what I mean? I loved every year, I think."

While running his own business, Thomas would frequently visit the Richard Irvin Building to pay his bills. All the local fish sellers would keep a bond of around £2000 with Irvin, which ensured they paid their bills to the fishing companies. When he visits the dentist now, Thomas remembers what the building used to look like. "There was a concert room upstairs where they had big glass displays of the trawlers that were built. Every trawler he had built, he had a model made of it."

Tyne Brand, Richard Irvin's food canning business, operated on the Fish Quay between 1901 and 1976. "It was more famous than Fray Bentos at the time" Thomas recalls. He remembers Richard Irvin as a key figure in local affairs, not only managing Tyne Brand but also doing a stints as mayor of North Shields and as a magistrate. "He looked after his workers. He had his own house up by Preston Grange, with a tower built on the top. He would stand up there, looking at his trawlers coming into the Tyne."

North Shields was nicknamed 'The Silver City' because it was one of the busiest ports in the UK for herring, and these shiny fish were affectionately called 'Silver Darlings'. "Anything that comes out the North Sea is good food" Thomas says. He still goes to Seaview Fisheries to pick up some fish for his supper, and he'll always choose haddock over cod. "It's beautiful, it's a stronger taste than cod but people don't realise it's so much nicer."

Since Thomas retired he's been fulfilling a lifelong desire to write, and has begun recording his memories as poems and stories. "It keeps me occupied. Even at nighttime, I've got a notepad and a pen by my bed" he says. Thomas has kindly shared his poem 'The Silver City' with Union Quay Bites, which you can read on page 8.

An excerpt from 'The Silver City' by Thomas Cottingham.

Silver Darling, shine and sparkle, light up the city, to brighten the way,
Rolling out the barrels, singing Christmas carols,
And everyone is coping, working out in the open,
Everything is shining bright, whether it's day or night,
There's Margaret and Kitty, working in the Silver City.

You don't need to serve your time, just be there and in your prime,
Coal and ice don't go together, like a bowl of rice,
If you want my advice, don't think twice,
Give the man a Silver Darling say it's from the Skipper,
The next day you go back, he'll hand you a kipper.

It's the land of plenty fishies, Silver Darlings will always shine,
In this town its always busy, it's where you'll find me all the time,
Everyone knows that they don't go together ice and coal,
Working with fish or down a pit just causes strikes or dole...



Smile Transformation

A new smile that still feels like you - real life results from our dental team.



Composite bonding is a gentle, minimally invasive way to enhance your smile using a tooth-coloured resin that blends seamlessly with your natural teeth.

The result is teeth that look healthier, more balanced, and completely you.

Patients often tell us they feel more confident, more comfortable smiling, and pleasantly surprised by how natural everything looks and feels.

Why patients love composite bonding:

- No drilling, no stress: A kind approach that preserves your natural teeth.
- Tooth-friendly: Usually no removal of healthy tooth structure
- Quick confidence boost: Treatment is often completed in just one visit
- Added protection: The bonded resin forms a strong outer layer that helps shield the tooth from future wear or damage.



Take your first step towards transforming your smile by booking a consultation with our Treatment Coordinator.

Call our reception team on 0191 2596506 or email reception@unionquaydental.co.uk

What's on?



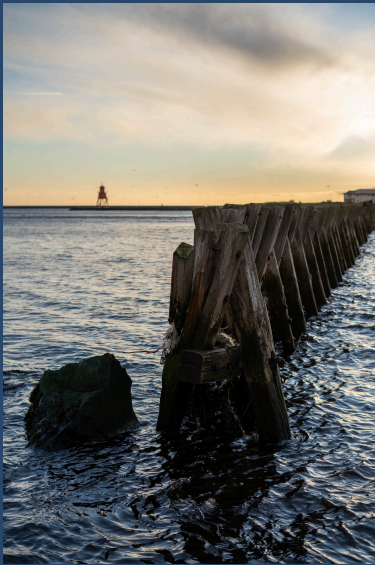
Tynemouth Longboard Classic

Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd March.
Tynemouth Longsands Beach

Hosted by Tynemouth Surf Co and British Longboard Union.

Surf competition with categories including Men's Open, Women's Open, Over 40s, Cadets (under 16s) and Juniors.

More info [here](#)



Heritage Talk: The Keelmen of North Tyneside

Tuesday 24th March 13:00 - 14:00
The Old Low Light

Alan Fidler explores the history of a colourful group of men and their families who played a significant role in the story of Tyneside and the coal industry which was crucial to the development of Britain for 300 years.

Tickets [here](#)



North Sea Surf Film Festival

Thurs 26th - Sat 28th March

Various venues in North Tyneside.

A new, independent, grassroots film experience bringing together community, creativity, environmentalism and thought-provoking surf film and photography from across the globe. Join us as we build an inspiring weekend of events and screenings.

Tickets [here](#)

Leave a review



"I had a hygienist appointment with Elaine. I have sensitive teeth and have always hated having this done. I get very nervous. She always makes you feel at ease and is the only hygienist I have found who can do a brilliant job without any pain at all. You can totally relax knowing she is excellent at her job. So so happy I have found this place. I also highly rate my dentist, Jamie. He is super friendly and he remembers you each time you visit. He is thorough and professional."

- Tania J.



Thanks to all our patients who have left us 5 Star reviews over the last few months.

We are proud to be providing you with the highest level of care. We would love you to leave us a review.

[Leave us a Google review.](#)

Get in touch

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Tyne & Wear

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