

upon tyne

Summer 2020 @upontynemag

your free culture guide from
newcastle to north tyneside

**From Get Carter
to Geordie Shore:
How is the North
East shown on
screen?**

**The five best places to
get vegetarian food in
Tyneside**



**Durham band
The Rumoured:
Why they stuck
to pub gigs**

**How living on
the coast can
help your mental
health**



Welcome to upon tyne.

upon tyne is the culture magazine for Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside. We cover everything from food, to music, to cinema. Every article is carefully curated to give you the best content and recommendations for you to thoroughly enjoy the North East and its wonderful coast.

In this edition we look at how regeneration is turning the Fish Quay in North Shields into a nightlife hub, the best vegetarian restaurants and *Parasite's* success at the 92nd Academy Awards.

As always, we want your suggestions for next season's edition. Spot anything? Tweet us at @upontynemag.



Meet the author

Sarah was born and raised in North Shields and has lived in the North East all her life (minus a two-year stint in Manchester). Her favourite parts of the North East are a walk along the coast, a pint next to the River Tyne and a trip to the Tyneside Cinema, which she refers to as her second home.

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What's on this season

It will come at no surprise many events over the coming months will either be cancelled or rescheduled due to the coronavirus outbreak. Nevertheless, here's a look at some events - for now! - that are still going ahead.

Music

HIT THE NORTH 1ST-3RD MAY.

Hit the North showcases a variety of artists every year. Kicking off the opening events this year are Pale Waves.

MOUTH OF TYNE FESTIVAL 9TH-12TH JULY.

Headlining this year are Keane and Lighthouse Family. Also appearing is Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin.

THIS IS TOMORROW 14TH-16TH AUGUST.

Sam Fender is headlining this year, along with Gerry Cinnamon and Royal Blood.

Food and Drink

WHITLEY BAY PROPER FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL 20TH-21ST JUNE.

The free event on the Spanish City Plaza brings together great local, independent eateries. Look out for local musicians as well!

FLASH HOUSE BREWING CO. ALL SUMMER.

The summer season means Flash House Brewing Co. will be teaming up with food pop-ups from all over North Tyneside. Perfect with a pint.

Culture and Film

OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL 8TH OCTOBER.

Held at Whitley Bay Playhouse, the festival features surfers, divers and oceanographers showcasing marine life directly from their natural habitats.

NORTH EAST DOG FESTIVAL 5TH SEPTEMBER.

Just out of the city centre in Ponteland, this festival is any dog lover's dream.



Why one County Durham band decided to stick to pub gigs

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Sting, Mark Knopfler, Neil Tennant, Eric Burdon. These are just some of the most well-known musical artists to come out of Tyneside. All are part of bands that helped to define the sounds of the sixties, seventies and eighties.

These artists did not find fame in Newcastle. Each found their big break in London, hundreds of miles away from their northern hometown. As the decades go by, there seems to be less and less new artists appearing out of Newcastle. The most well known artist in recent years is Sam Fender, who has managed to tie his image to North Shields. But why does there seem to be a smaller amount of emerging talent coming from Tyneside?

The Rumoured are a four-piece band who hail from County Durham. Consisting of lead singer Paige, drummer Rachel, guitarist James and bassist Jake, they tour pubs up and down the North East. Each member shares a strong passion for music, but opted to primarily stay as a cover band due to Newcastle's tiny music scene.

"The scene round here is not as good as when you have to travel two, three hours away," explains Rachel. "That's why we just do pub gigs and do it for fun."

They didn't come to this conclusion without lack of trying. Any attempt to "get something off the ground" never worked. They originally played under the name Heroine, as the band has always had a female lead singer.



They had to change their name, as people assumed they were a "bunch of kids taking heroin six years ago." Rachel decided on the name The Rumoured, after seeing a hairdressers in Gateshead. Not after Fleetwood Mac's Rumours, as the rest of the band assumed was where she got the name from.

When you think of Newcastle, its music scene is not something that springs to mind. Major venues people think of include the Utilita Arena, City Hall or the O2 Academy. It is different to a place like Manchester, where there is a different venue for every genre. That specific lack of venues is another reason why The Rumoured decided to stick to pub gigs. Before starting the band, Rachel was the drummer for another band, and saw these experiences first hand.

"When I used to do my own stuff it was massively different. Up here you don't really get a lot of places that will give you a chance, whereas York and places like that everyone was there to see the band and actually give you a bit of attention."

Sticking to covering songs has allowed the band to change their line up depending on where they play. The Maggie Bank in North Shields, where they are playing, regularly has bands covering seventies and eighties rock, and The Rumoured easily caters to that

demand.

“I think you just have to choose what people will like,” explains Paige. “Because you know what certain venues will like.

“If we play a song that someone might not know, the crowd just goes dead and quiet, it’s totally different.”

A challenge of touring pubs is the uncertainty of the audience. The larger the crowd, the better the audience. When a pub is quiet, it can be hard to feel as energetic compared to playing in front of a rowdier crowd. At The Maggie Bank, it is a quieter Friday night ahead of their performance and this already seems to be making an influence on how the set will go.

“It’s hard to perform when there’s not an atmosphere,” Rachel confirms. “When a place is quiet it affects how you are on stage. We don’t get into it as much.”

“Sing from your heart, not your wallet,” Paige adds. It is a phrase they all stand by, and keep it in mind when they are performing. (Read a review of their gig on page 6)

Being brought up in the North East has not influenced their music, in the way Blossoms draw inspiration from Oasis. Despite sharing the same passion for classic rock, their individual music tastes range from heavy metal to Southern Texan rock; miles away from County Durham. For Paige, finding her own style was more important than being influenced by where she was brought up. “I like a lot of everything. I think if you can relate to a lot of songs that’s the most important thing, the lyrics are the most important part of the song.”

Despite this, they still have favourite artists from the North East, including heavy metal bands Starved and Creak and, naturally, Sam Fender. A sense of hometown pride is common when it comes to talking about Fender. For us nineties babies, he is the only mainstream artist from the North East and has still kept a local normality to him. References to North Shields trickle through his songs and for anyone familiar with the town, it’s an extra touch.

“There’s not [many people] popular up here,” says Jake. “As soon as Sam Fender got big people were going ‘oh get in there’s someone local.’”

Even though they affectionately call themselves a “hobby band,” it’s clear The Rumoured love what they do, and have incorporated music into their life outside of the band. Rachel is a full-time drum teacher, and James and Jake study music at New College Durham. Paige works at Greggs, and is very proud to say that she does.

It is also clear they love their hobby band, and enjoy travelling from pub to pub to perform, even if it is only just up to an hour away. For them, the smaller successes can feel like the biggest ones, especially when the crowd is large and the atmosphere is great.

“It’s just nice if you get asked back,” jokes Paige, but there is affection in her voice. “You know you’ve gone down well.”



Review: The Rumoured at The Magnessia Bank

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Five-piece band The Rumoured made their presence known on The Maggie Bank's tiny stage. Right from the very first song, the band demands your attention with their heavy playing style. Like most bands that perform at The Maggie Bank, The Rumoured covers a lot of rock bands, including Fleetwood Mac, Nirvana and Guns 'N Roses. But what sets The Rumoured out from the rest is their female lead singer, spinning the male sung songs into a different perspective. The rough and scratchy vocals of the lead singer and the dominant strings of the electric guitar is enough to captivate any audience. But where The Rumoured falter here is down to the lack of atmosphere from this Friday night audience. It's a shame, as all the classic songs are there, enough to make anyone start dancing. But due to the smaller audience, no one is dancing, and it feels as if there is a separation between audience and band.



This doesn't stop The Rumoured from having a good time. They are energetic and playing off of one another throughout their performance. Slowly enough, their energy treks down toward the audience where one by one, they start to get up and dance, until the tiny dance floor is full.

The Rumored make do with what they have, but given the time, the weather and the audience, it's probably safe to say that it's not one of their better gigs. Perhaps if they were in a bigger venue with a bigger and better audience, they would truly be able to thrive.



The big read: How is the North East represented on film and television?

Copy and images by Sarah Storer unless stated otherwise. Quotes in italics are responses from survey created for this article.

In one of the most famous scenes in the 1971 film *Get Carter*, Jack Carter (Michael Caine) throws gangster Cliff Brumby off of the ledge of Trinity Square car park in Gateshead. For the next 40 years before its demolition, it was referred to as “the *Get Carter* car park,” forever to be immortalised in connection with the film. Speaking at a Q&A to celebrate the 40th anniversary, director Mike Hodges explained he chose Newcastle and Gateshead as the film’s location because “it was important that Jack Carter came from a hard, deprived background.

“The visual drama of Newcastle took my breath away.”

Hodges’s decision to use Newcastle for its deprived skyline and working-class demographic is one of the first mainstream pieces of media to set this example. In the nearly 50 years since the film’s release, numerous films and television shows have followed in Hodges’s footsteps.

The most popular shows in recent years set in the North East have included *Vera* and *Geordie Shore*. Popular shows of the past are *Byker Grove* and *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*. Just watching one episode of any of these shows introduces an audience to the common portrayal of people from the North East: a stereotypical imitation of the working class. To understand why the North East received this one-tone portrayal, it is necessary to look at how recent socioeconomic history has affected the area and its residents. To gather more opinions, I conducted a survey with people who live in the North East, to see if their answers supported or disapproved of how the area is

represented in the media. Rather unsurprisingly, their answers generally did not support the representation.

A popular answer focused on the lack of airtime of the North East’s scenery. Newcastle holds the title for the most northern city in England. Despite this, the first northern city to pop into an outsider to the North East’s mind is usually Manchester. Often dubbed “the capital of the North,” Manchester does earn the title for its industry and media strengths, it does lead to the connotation culturally the North of England starts and ends in Manchester, leaving everything up to Berwick-upon-Tweed behind.



Image sourced from MovieStillsDB.com

Being at least three hours away by train from London, it is clear television producers will often scout locations and casts closer to London than Newcastle. However, this has not stopped production in the North East. The coastline and countryside around Northumberland and North Yorkshire are regularly used as the base for other locations when shooting a film, rather than its actual setting. The one-take *Dunkirk* scene in Joe Wright’s *Atonement* was filmed at a beach in Redcar. Alnwick Castle was famously used as Hogwarts in the first two *Harry Potter* films. There has been other less known

films shot in the North East, such as Roman Polanski's *Macbeth*; and a lot of interior scenes in the 1998 film *Elizabeth* were shot in Durham Cathedral. Despite being used as a popular filming location, it is hard to think of more than a handful of recent television shows and films that show the North East as the North East. Obvious examples are *Vera* and *Hebburn*, and factual television includes *Our Cops in the North* and *The Metro: A Rail Life Story*. These popular examples do make it look like there is an increase in television commissions for the North East. But still, all of these shows continue to portray the North East in its one-tone depiction as a hard, cold, working class area. Northumberland specifically challenges this depiction with its castles, countryside and coastline, but is rarely seen on television, and even less so in a film. If a producer could use any National Park in the UK, why not Northumberland?

Rachel Pronger is the Film Programme Coordinator at the Tyneside Cinema in Newcastle. She is from Bradford, which has its own specific set of negative portrayals in the mainstream media. She thinks producers often struggle showing the North East without relying on stereotypes.

"I think its people contrasting the gritty working-class life with the spectacular nature of the city's architecture and then when you go further out to the coast and countryside. Sometimes people don't know how to combine those two things without any subtlety or nuance. There is a lack of breadth in what

gets shot and made and what is seen is an acceptable 'Geordie piece of work.'"

The North East's distance away from other major cities does give the perception of a neglected North. By keeping production of films and television shows in the North to Manchester and Yorkshire - which does have its own specific representation in the media - the deliberate lack of versatility shown to the North East will mean unless they visit for themselves, audiences will not know the full scope and beauty to the area. This perceived connotation directly stems from the one-tone portrayal of derelict Newcastle and its working-class citizens. Director Ken Loach won his second Palme d'Or at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival with *I, Daniel Blake*. The film focuses on Daniel Blake, a man stuck between the welfare system and being unfit for work. Whilst it is a touching and poignant film, like Hodges, Loach has clearly used Newcastle as the film's location for its buildings and bleak landscape. Loach is known for his kitchen-sink realism, and *I, Daniel Blake* is no exception to this. The cinematography matches the melancholic tone of the film; therefore, Newcastle is not shown in an inviting way. Positive moments are rare, so positive depictions of Newcastle are rare.

Even though Loach uses Newcastle in *I, Daniel Blake* and recent film *Sorry We Missed You* as a backdrop for his kitchen-sink realism, he does use the setting in order to make a political point; another common feature through all of his films. It's easy to make a connection to the representation of the North East in the media



Image sourced from [MoviestillsDB.com](https://www.moviestillsdb.com)

with the years of austerity and government cuts. What was once a ripe landscape for shipbuilding and mining, Margaret Thatcher's desire for privatisation and overseas production saw the industries massively decline. Some towns still struggle with the effects of this today. There is no denying the North East has always been a predominately working-class area, so it makes sense for that to be reflected in the media. But when it is the only representation a person sees of themselves, it becomes too unflattering. Across all counties in the UK, there are varying degrees of wealth and class status. It is too easy to separate the North and South into poor vs rich and working vs middle class ideologies and stick to those portrayals. The survey showed that people are generally tired of this portrayal of the North East. There were three main negative connotations associated with the North East that answers suggested.

The Geordie accent, strong drinking and football culture and general perception of being uneducated creates a sense of *Schadenfreude*, the pleasure from another's discomfort, to those of the upper classes. Television shows such as *Geordie Shore* are there for the audience to mock the cast for their "stupid" antics and "simple" way of life. If these people are to be mocked, then what does it say for the rest of the North East's population?

"It is still seen and portrayed as old fashioned or behind the times. Or somewhere people go to get drunk."

Following on, the North East also receives portrayals as a poor, uneducated region. This became apparent in recent years due to the extensive coverage of the Brexit referendum and aftermath. When needing to interview Leave voters, the North was often the most popular region to do so. The Northern, working-class worker quickly became a common

stereotype for the Leave voter, again bringing mockery from social media. The general concession from middle-class Remain voters on social media was if Northerners had a decent education, then they would not have voted leave in the Referendum. The poverty in the North East has also been a setting for other reality television, including BBC Three's *Canny Cops*, set in Horden, and the second series of Channel 4's *Benefits Street* in Stockton-on-Tees. In *Canny Cops* specifically, the residents of Horden appear as a caricature of the working-class stereotype. The audience are too busy laughing at the people they on screen to stop and think about the socioeconomic implications that causes them to act the way they do.

"Most of them are shown as poor, unemployed, poorly educated, heavy smokers and drinkers who like to bet on the dogs and horses"

The North East also seems to receive the stereotype of the traditional, occasionally violent and traditional working-class man. Examples include the father in *Billy Elliot*. Whilst the film is a period piece, elements of the character and effects of the Miner's Strike still remain, especially in parts of Sunderland and County Durham. In recent years, Newcastle United supporters have gathered media attention for being rowdy and occasionally very aggressive. This depiction of the fans creates the fundamental stereotype of Newcastle as a loud and aggressive city filled with drunks and football hooligans. This makes the city look unappealing to visitors whilst also giving Twitter trolls masses of material to use.

"You only need to see the news once every few weeks to see a NUFC fan with their top off to see the stereotypical Geordie."

Due to the declining film industry in the UK, specifically in regional areas, does mean there will be a lack of independent productions in the North East. Producers aren't going to look to the North East if they can't afford it. As well as this, the lack of major culture hubs will impact on new, regional filmmakers getting the start-up they need to compete with other filmmakers from around the country. Historically, there has been a strong filmmaking community in the North East which has now dwindled like the rest of the country. "At the moment the filmmaking culture in the UK is very much commissioner based," explains Pronger. "You always have to ask where these people are coming from and who they are serving."

Whilst Newcastle is so well connected with the rest of the UK, it can feel isolated at times.

In 2019, an article in *The Spectator* went viral for criticising Sunderland-born Lauren Laverne as the new presenter of *Desert Island Discs*. A main factor stems from Laverne being "regional," her Sunderland accent practically unheard of on Radio 4. If Laverne is unsuitable for radio because of her accent, what does that leave for other North Eastern presenters? Unless you talk like Kate Adie, there is a presumption you won't rise up to national media, forever stuck in regional posts. Hopefully this will start to change as national broadcast companies move up North. The BBC and ITV have already made base in Media City in Salford, and Channel 4 is in the midst of partially moving to Leeds. Pronger also explained the British Film Institute is also considering moving some of its bases up North.

The BFI also is connected with Film Hub North, of which the Tyneside Cinema partially leads. The Hub ensures there is a constant strong film culture across the entire North of England.

In 2018 the Tyneside Cinema ran an exhibition titled *The Cinematic North East*,



highlighting films set and filmed in the North East. It ran alongside *The Great Exhibition of the North*, which was held across the summer. The exhibition screened many of the films already mentioned, and less well-known pieces such as *Stormy Monday*, *Days of Hope* and *The Devils*. The Tyneside Cinema is the only arts and culture hub in the North East, and the only cinema in Newcastle to screen international and independent films, away from the multiplex. "Newcastle has a very strong film-going culture," says Pronger, "The cinema has been embedded here for so long. Films that have a connection to the North East do extremely well, *I, Daniel Blake* is one of the highest-grossing films of all time at the cinema. "It shows a sense of identity and regional pride that people will support work about the area in a very distinctive way."

The building has stood on Pilgrim Street since 1937 and now runs educational programmes for young and inspiring filmmakers, giving access to experience they would not have been able to get otherwise. Environments like the Tyneside Cinema are needed to ensure filmmakers local to the region are able to get their feet off the ground in such a London-centric industry.



Even though there is a lack of it shown, the North East's scenery, specifically the coastline and countryside are always well received whenever they appear on screen. The beauty of the area makes up for the minimal screen time and the rarity of it all allows for a different area to be shown every time. Television shows like *Vera* use the scenery as a secondary character, often matching the tone and feeling of each episode. *Vera's* popularity has created an influx of interest to the area, firmly putting smaller Northumberland towns onto the map.

"The programmes being made now appear to have a lot of integrity and warmth. They have become a source of pride for people in the area."

Regional pride is strong in the North East. It is another element commonly associated with the region, from football matches to reality television competitions. It is also seen in the fictional world, the most so in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*. The three Geordie characters, played by Tim Healy, Jimmy Nail and Kevin Whately, show the resilience of the working-class man during a time of economic struggle for the North East. The show gives an accurate representation of the working-class and is not demeaning in any form. The audience finds themselves laughing with the characters, not at them.

"Gritty, earthy, dry humoured, the portrayal appears less patronising these days."

If the general consensus is the representation of the North East is improving, then as audiences and the media look toward the future it will continue to improve to where audiences will be happier. For this to happen, there needs to be more funding and investment from commissioners, as well as giving regional filmmakers the opportunity to start their careers. Locals want to see a wider spectrum of scenery, architecture and people.

"Show the true picture of diversity and vibrancy that exists in Newcastle these days."

"A Geordie voice behind the lens. It would give the area a voice and uncover some of the everyday beauty around here."

As for Pronger, her ideal representation is for more nuanced, contemporary portrayals. "I think there is a slightly throwback nostalgia attitude to a lot of the North. These are big cosmopolitan cities and it would be great to see more films that talk about ethnic minorities in these cities."

The culture of the North East is broad and vast. Hopefully one day, it will be shown in the way it deserves.

Review: *Parasite*

Copy by Sarah Storer and images sourced from NEON.

Parasite is director Bong Joon-ho's masterpiece. Delicately crafted, it is not suited to one defining genre. It is a comedy, a thriller, a nightmare of anxiety. The metaphor of class and capitalism, shown with two houses, is so simple yet so complex. The further the camera tracks through the houses, the darker the story becomes.

We are first introduced to the Kim family in their semi-basement home, struggling to make means to an end when son Ki-Woo (Choi Woo-shik) is offered the chance to tutor the daughter of the wealthy Park family, who live in a mansion overlooking Seoul. One by one, the Kims inject themselves into the Park's household, unaware of the consequences that lie beneath.

Ultimately, the film is carried by its tremendous actors - who became the first non-English cast to win Outstanding Performance by a Cast at the Screen Actors Guild Awards in January. Song Kang-ho gave one of the best performances of the year as patriarch Kim Ki-taek and Cho Yeo-jeong's subtle performance as the naïve Choi Yeon-gyo, the mother of the Parks.

By carefully not sticking to stereotypes, Bong is able to get the audience to think deeper about who the real parasite is. Is it the Kims, who scheme their way to the upper class, or is it the Parks, who leech off the poorer families that give them their wealth? As the story progresses, it becomes harder to deduce who it might be.

You almost feel sorry for her as she falls for the Kims's twists and tricks.

Parasite makes you laugh and squirm, but most importantly, makes you think about society and what needs to change.



What *Parasite*'s win means for the film industry

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In February, The Oscars made history by awarding *Parasite* Best Picture - the first film not in the English language to win the award. After unanimously winning the Palme d'Or at last year's Cannes Film Festival, director Bong Joon-ho jumped on a wave of momentum that did not stop.

That success has continued after The Oscars, where it won three other awards (Director, Original Screenplay and International Feature). It has become the highest-grossing foreign-language film in the UK and it was in the Tyne-side Cinema's top five for a film's opening in its 83-year history. It continues to sell out screens and generate intense audience engagements.

A common remark from both critics and director Bong is *Parasite* has become a worldwide phenomenon due to its relatability. Despite being so rooted in Korean

culture, it has won over international audiences with its main themes of class culture and capitalism. As Bong states: "The film talks about two opposing families, about the rich versus the poor, and that is a universal theme, because we all live in the same country now: that of capitalism."

However, there is still a long way to go. Director Bong is only the second Asian director to win best director. *Parasite*'s cast, despite their critical acclaim, did not receive any acting nominations. All but one of the acting nominations were white, going back on the effort made by The Academy to increase its diversity.

Who knows what the 2021 ceremony will bring. But, *Parasite*'s incredible success at The Oscars shows that Hollywood is finally beginning to become more inclusive - embracing international films and seeing past the subtitles.

The five best veggie restaurants along the River Tyne

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Located in Haymarket Metro Station, **Shijo** is a Japanese fast food restaurant that serves traditional curries, soups and noodles alike. It is an intimate space, where everything is freshly prepared steps away from your table. Almost every piece of the menu has a meat-free option, and with such a wide choice, there's something new to try every time.

I TRIED: Tofu Katsu Curry, £5.90.

The Katsu Curry is worth trying for the tofu alone. The deep-fried breaded strips look and taste texturally similar to chicken and go perfectly atop the semi-spicy curry sauce, rice and vegetables. It's a large portion, so ideal for a big lunch or dinner.

A special part of Shijo is due to its small size, you may share your table with strangers, bringing the community together to share good food.

Flat Caps Coffee on Carliol Square is a bright, industrial coffee shop that is frequently mentioned as one of the best in Newcastle. Their breakfast and lunch menus have a wide variety of vegan and vegetarian options, catering to all choices.

I TRIED: Turkish Eggs, £8.

Whilst a more expensive item on the menu, the price is worth it after the first bite. The dish consists of poached eggs, flatbreads and yoghurt topped with turkish herbs and spices, apricots and almonds and walnuts. It is a fresh yet filling breakfast that will leave you prepared for the rest of the day.



Lobo Rojo, down on North Shields's Fish Quay, offers an alternative menu to the abundance of seafood with its extensive choice of tacos, burritos and enchiladas. References to Mexico run throughout the restaurant, from the decorations right down to the lager. Whilst it doesn't have as many meat-free options as the other restaurants in this list, The choices available makes it a worthy pick.

I TRIED: Coliflor tacos, £6.50.

Deep-fried cauliflower sits atop a bed of crispy kale, black beans and salsa on soft corn tortillas. It is a light dish, yet filling and just spicy enough to where the salsa is not overpowering. The taste and texture is remnant of a fish taco, but you do not find yourself missing any meat after the first bite.

The portions are on the smaller side, so I would recommend a side, such as dirty fries or homemade tortilla chips with salsa and guacamole.



The best vegetarian breakfast belongs to **The Boatyard**, located by Cullercoats Bay. With its nautical theme, it prides itself on sourcing local produce and partnering with other local small businesses: Gareth James Chocolatier in Tynemouth, and coffee beans from Baristocracy roastery in North Shields. It's friendly and inviting, and guaranteed to serve good food every time.

I TRIED: Veggie Full English, £6.80.

This reinvented take on the English staple tastes better to a meat version, partially due to the lack of greasy fried meats and the addition of spinach and cheese. The highlight is the homemade glamorgan sausage, giving customers a different choice to a soy-based sausage. The fried halloumi is positioned underneath the eggs which go well together.

Super Natural is a blink-and-you'll-miss-it café on Grainger Street. It is a vegetarian and vegan café; the only animal products used are cow's milk and cheese. Its interior is cozy and inviting with cushioned chairs and fairy lights that hang from the ceiling. It succeeds in bringing the outside in, like eating at a farmer's café in the countryside. In addition, Super Natural truly prides itself on being animal free: customers are not allowed to enter if they are wearing any fur.

I TRIED: Oven Roasted Vegetables with Hummus and Tomato Relish, £6.99.

Perfect for lunch, the seasonal vegetables fit perfect with the red pepper hummus and tomatoes. Served in a wholemeal loaf and served with tortilla chips and salad, it's great for those meat-free days.



From fishing to fancy cocktails: How North Shields's Fish Quay became a nightlife hub

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For years, when anyone thought of North Shields's Fish Quay, they would think of the smell of the fish market. Or perhaps they would think of the chippies. Or the abundance of Sambuca restaurants that line Union Road. Nowadays, they may think of the row of pubs and restaurants, or complain that a new venue pops up every week. Slowly but surely, the Fish Quay is gaining a new reputation for its nightlife.

Ever since the town's beginnings in 1225, the fishing industry has been ripe in North Shields. The Fish Quay was originally used for supplies to Tynemouth Priory. Due to its proximity to the River Tyne, it soon became a hub for merchants, traders and fishermen. The port's popularity grew and by 1851, it would have regular markets, as well as frequent visits from traders and fishermen to popular pub the Northumberland Arms. Known as The Jungle, the pub became notorious for its frequent fights and scruff ups.

Along with the fishing industry, the Fish Quay started to decline in the 1980s, as Margaret Thatcher's government sought after cheaper, sourced-from-abroad produce. At the turn of the millennium, further cuts to the fishing industry occurred, causing protests from fishermen along the River Tyne. What was once a thriving community hub was turning toward becoming a derelict area.

It was at the turn of the millennium when the Fish Quay started its regeneration. In 2001, North Tyneside Council introduced a "Fish Quay regeneration strategy," where more than £20 million has been invested into the area. Some of the earliest businesses include Sambuca, the first of many across the North East, The Quay Taphouse, and Low Lights Tavern, a

staple of North Shields since the 17th Century. Whilst still not at the level of popularity it is at now, the addition of these venues started generating fresh footfall to the Fish Quay, creating a demand for more. Throughout the 2000s, businesses came and went, including two further Sambuca restaurants, new cafés and Fish and Chip shops. By the 2010s, gears switched to the opening of many new bars, a lot taking advantage of the micropub and gin bar trends. This influx of new venues plus the investment from the Council, gave the Fish Quay a new reputation for its nightlife, a stark contrast to when the fishing industry was at its peak. It now stands equal with the likes of Tynemouth and Whitley Bay, offering a variety of venues for the large numbers of residents and tourists that now choose the Fish Quay for a night out.

The most popular places in the last four years have included The Salty Sea Dog, Dodgin's Yard, Allards on the Quay and The Ship's Cat. Each offer a different atmosphere and drinks menu, showing the versatility the Fish Quay has. Smaller places such as Juke Shed Bar tend to





have less of a menu, but attract crowds due to regular sets of musicians. It is common to find live acts in the pubs; each act gains a large audience as they play in venues that suits their music best. Juke Shed Bar and Low Lights Tavern play for fans of country and folk, whereas The Ship's Cat has done trial runs of DJs and club nights.

Irvins Brasserie was the first restaurant to offer an alternative menu to the abundance of Italian and Fish and Chip restaurants when it opened in 2010. Three years later saw the opening of The Staith House, founded by John and Kimberly Carlton and business partner James Laffan. Both became renowned for their food, consisting of locally sourced fish and meats.

"We cook the fish from around the corner," explains James. "It's great to have all that produce on your doorstep. It's a good location and a good hub."

The Staith House is featured in the 2019 Michelin Guide and holds other accolades including winner of The Great British Pub Awards, Living North Pub of the Year and The Catey's Newcomer of the Year. It prides itself on its food and has upheld its quality and popularity since opening.

The Staith House is not the only symbol of success that the Fish Quay has to offer. Seafood restaurant River Café on the Tyne has also been featured in the Michelin Guide, as did Irvins before its closure in 2017. Low Lights Tavern has seen an increase in popularity with a younger generation due to Sam Fender, who was discovered by his manager whilst working in the pub.

His Brit Critics Choice Award is now installed as a draught pump, mixing the old with the new.

A newcomer to the Fish Quay would not immediately see the remnants of its history. Nods to it are there, and a small fishing port still remains. On a summer's day, a newcomer would see a mass of people; drinking, eating and moving from pub to restaurant, restaurant to bar. Sometimes, it is hard to find a seat indoors or outdoors. The investment from the Council gives the opportunity for it to be a more inviting space and creating a better atmosphere; not just inside each venue, but the entire area. Upcycled fishermen's crates have become a communal dining space, directly across from the Fish and Chip shops. During the warmer months, a beach clean is organised by organisation Surfers against Sewage, helping to preserve the natural beauty of the coastline. This positive, cleaner atmosphere makes the Fish Quay an ideal location for new start-ups.

One of the newest bars to open in the last year is Twelve Twenty Five, taking its name from North Shields's first historical reference. Since opening last September, the bar has seen a rapid rise in popularity. One of the main reasons for choosing the Fish Quay as a location was the recent "boom," according to Dan, one of the managers.

"Everything seems to be building up down here quite nicely, everything seems to be picking up. A lot more footfall down here every week." Like The Staith House, Twelve Twenty Five makes use of the

fishmongers “over the road.”

“It’s hugely beneficial. You can’t get fish any fresher than out the ocean the day before. I don’t believe in seafood unless it’s on the coast.”

Whilst Dan cannot sing the praises of the Fish Quay enough, he is also quick to highlight the dangers of rapid regeneration. “It’s overdoing it. If too many places open up here and give people far too much choice, then some businesses are going to hurt from it.”

A common complaint of the regeneration is that possibility of “overdoing it.” The influx of new venues may appear to be too overwhelming, as customers feel the obligation to divide their time between each one, spending less money. From Facebook groups to family reunions, comments on the Fish Quay is always a regular occurrence. Frequent complaints often feature the price of food and drink. Gone are the days of a cheap and quick pint, as social clubs started to struggle against new, trendy bars that stand along the coastline. Amongst the older generations, there was a mutual sadness when The Pan Shop closed its doors for the last time.

For many, the developments show how the area is changing with the times. Charli Fox, 18, often goes to the Fish Quay for what she calls a relaxed night out.

“It’s great to have alternatives to the city centre. There’s a variety of environments ranging from cocktail bars to friendly pubs. It can be different every time.”

Charli and her friends often go to Twelve Twenty Five and Allards, as it tends to attract more people of their demographic. A large part of the Council’s regeneration scheme was the revival of the Mouth of the Tyne Festival. Renamed from the Fish Quay Festival and moved to Tynemouth, the festival is a highlight of the summer, celebrating local culture. However, some long-term residents of North Shields do not enjoy the festival as much as others. As its old namesake would suggest, the Fish Quay Festival celebrated the community and culture of the Fish Quay.

It was organised by fishermen, primarily for those who lived close to the area. Chris, a regular at Low Lights Tavern, would attend the festival during his youth. He is more reluctant to attend it now, as he claims its ideologies have changed.

“It used to be a free festival for fishermen, by fishermen. Now, you have to pay and all the money goes to the rich people at the Council.”

Moving a festival to another village may not appear to be a big deal, but to some it symbolises the start to the Fish Quay losing its original purpose of supporting the fishing industry. As the Fish Quay grows even more popular and the fishing industry declines further, that history may eventually be lost for good.

In order for that history to be preserved, The Old Low Light heritage centre opened to the public in 2016. The centre’s main purpose is to educate its visitors of North Shields’s history, through local people. It also features exhibits on the culture of the town, such as North Shields Football Club. Run by volunteers, it offers further activities and events across all of North Tyneside, as well as hosting talks from various historians and local MPs. The Old Low Light offers a family friendly experience to the Fish Quay, away from the pubs and bars. It adds to the ever-growing atmosphere, and ties into the clean-up of the beaches; giving visitors a different way to explore the area.

As the bars become more popular, traditional fish shops appear to hide away. Whilst it is still common for people to buy fresh fish at the Fish Quay, there has been a decrease in the options available. Despite this, it shows there will always be a demand for fresh fish, and it is likely these providers will stay around for a long time. As with any seaside town, there is still a popular fish market, which quietly allows the fishing industry in the area to flourish. So much so, North Shields has been named as the “premier prawn port” and is still working, in comparison to other ports further down the coast, such as Hull and Grimsby.

A lot of the bars include direct references to the Fish Quay, whether this is in their name, like Twelve Twenty Five, or in their decorations. The Salty Sea Dog has numerous references to fishermen, through portraits and pictures of ship vessels. The décor at Dodgin's Yard is rustic, in reference to the old shipyard it was named after. Perhaps the most touching homage to the Fish Quay is Fiddler's Green, a monument dedicated to fishermen lost at sea. The giant fisherman looks out to the North Sea, as the poem Fiddler's Green is read aloud by the people who stop to visit.

As the community and the Council look toward the future of the Fish Quay, it is clear the openings of new venues are not going to slow down. Further up Tanner's Bank is the Wheelhouse Café, a quiet hideaway from the busier strip of bars. In late 2019, plans were announced for an old fish factory to be turned into a craft beer and street food hub,



similar to By The River Brew Co on Gateshead quayside. To some, this may seem more like gentrification than regeneration – further reusing part of the Fish Quay's history to stay on trend with the likes of Newcastle. However, overall the reception to these further developments is a positive one. MP for Tynemouth Alan Campbell has frequently spoke about the need for further investment into coastal towns like North Shields. He said: "North Shields

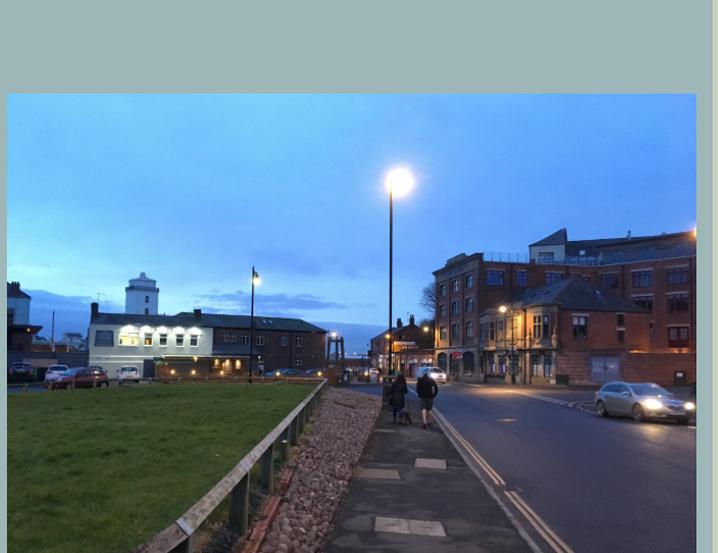
Fish Quay regeneration is an important part of the regeneration of the coast. A lot of hard work has gone into it from local people. It respects the fact that North Shields is a working fishing port but is also working to bring in visitors.

"The regeneration has had a positive impact on the town but it still feels separate and cut off at times. It's important that the Fish Quay is better connected to the town centre and that's part of the plan."

A catalyst to ensure the connection of the Fish Quay to the town centre has been the development to Smith's Dock. The ship building site went defunct in the 1980s, and is now currently underway a separate, ten-year project to redevelop the area into residential living and commercial sites. Already there are residents living in the new townhouses and apartments, including homes designed by architect George Clarke. They have a distinct modern structure to them, a stark contrast to the aging industrial buildings that line the Fish Quay. However, the new views of the developments are a welcomed one, showing to residents and investors the value the land has. Choosing Smith's Dock for site of development has created two further important factors to the Fish Quay: more footfall and more money. The new housing has drawn new residents, causing them to explore the culture minutes away from their homes. This in turn generates more money for businesses, not only for the core strip of the Fish Quay but the commercial properties to Smith's Dock. For example, restaurant 31 The Quay underneath apartment block The Smokehouses has gained a reputation for its food in the short amount of time the restaurant has been open. As the development on Smith's Dock grows over time, it is clear it will be a valuable part to the Fish Quay's future.

Any person who visits the Fish Quay will notice the difference between it and North Shields. The lack of investment in North Shields is clear, from the rundown buildings to a different chain branch closing. The most recent victim is Poundstretcher, past have included Santander and McDonald's. North Shields has fallen into the trap of a declining town as people start to shop more in larger cities, a scene common across the majority of towns in the UK. However, work has started improving on Northumberland Square and nearby Howard Street, proving that money is starting to work its way up from the Fish Quay.

Some of the workers in the bars appear to think differently, stating other towns along the coast should have their turn for investment. "I think Whitley Bay," says Dan. "With Spanish City's reopening and the burst that came from that, the parade of Whitley Bay will be next. I think it will just take a couple of really good investors to get it going."



Through North Shields's history and the ups and downs of the Fish Quay, one common element has always remained: the pride local people have for their town. Speak to anyone, and they will talk passionately about North Shields, the Fish Quay included. No matter what is in store next for the Fish Quay, its residents will always be behind it.

Where to go when you're down on the coast

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When the wind is calm and the sun is shining, there's no better time to go for a walk. Starting at North Shields Fish Quay, follow the coast until you reach Cullercoats. It takes just over an hour, or alternatively you can keep on going towards Whitley Bay. It's a simple way to get out of the house and enjoy the sea breeze. You can combine Tynemouth Market or a pub crawl into it, but sometimes it's better to keep it simple. Depending on the tides, walk along the beach and stop for a drink and chips at Crusoe's, or try the freshly-cooked fish from hidden gem Riley's Fish Shack. If those aren't appealing, the number of cafés in Cullercoats surely will draw you in.

RECOMMENDED: Riley's Fish Shack

The micro pub trend has well and truly taken off in North Tyneside. Each pub featured in this pub crawl thrives off of working together as a community - something that the bar owners speak often and passionately about. Easily accessible via the Metro, these four pubs offer an alternative drinking culture to that of the bars and clubs along the seafront.

ENIGMA TAP (Bedford St, North Shields): Enigma Tap sells locally produced ales and lagers from all over the North East. Decorated with references to North Shields, hometown pride runs throughout the pub. It also tries to be as sustainable as possible, from recycled scaffolding tables to plastic-free packets of crisps.

FLASH HOUSE BREWING CO. (Northumberland St, North Shields): Not far from the Fish Quay, the Flash House is a microbrewery with its own inhouse bar. Based in an up-cycled storage unit, it is a friendly and inviting pub that leaves you wanting to come back for more. It's well worth a visit in the summer, where it features pop-up food stalls that complement the ales perfectly.



THE BLIND PIG (Front St, Tynemouth): Situated inside the Land of Green Ginger, The Blind Pig is a 1920's-themed speakeasy, specialising in wines, gins and moonshine. Taking up a tiny part inside the redesigned church, it puts the micro in micro pub. It's snug and cosy, and requires you to speak easy to one another.

LEFT LUGGAGE (Monkseaton Metro station, Monkseaton): Based in the old waiting room at Monkseaton train station, Left Luggage is a staple in a cask ale drinker's pub crawl. As well as ales, it serves speciality spirits and lagers and food from local providers. There is also a regular busker's night, showing off the great talent the region has to offer.

RECOMMENDED: Tiny Dancer from Flash House Brewing Co.

The flea market on Tynemouth Metro station is open every weekend, come rain or shine. Each stall offers something different, whether that's antiques, memorabilia, handmade jewellery or records. The real star of the market are the numerous food stalls. From Greek to Indian to Northumbrian sausages, there's something for everyone. Another standout are the record stalls. Thanks to the record renaissance, the popularity in vinyls has skyrocketed, meaning there are thousands of records to choose from across the varying stalls. With a keen eye, you can sometimes find a hidden gem such as: The Beatles, The Beatles, Tusk, Fleetwood Mac and Simon and Garfunkel's Greatest Hits.

RECOMMENDED: Halloumi fries from Acropolis



How living on the coast helped my anxiety

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Every day, the North Sea looks different. Sometimes it is grey and choppy and sometimes the sun will shine over the waves, making the water glisten. I have lived by the coast for most of my life and without realising, I have taken it for granted.

In 2017, I moved to Manchester for University. I remember feeling desperate to get away, as I knew that what I wanted to do for a career I would not be able to do in Newcastle. But once I moved there, I could never fully settle.

For all of Manchester's greats, I was struggling to see them due to the fact I was becoming more and more anxious being out in the city. I found the city centre too big and too concentrated. I was longing to

be back home by the sea.

A study released by the University of Exeter last Autumn discovered that people who live less than 1km away from the coast are 22% less likely to have symptoms of a mental illness. In my experience, this appears to be true. In Manchester I felt trapped in the city, the peace of being near water was hours away. In Newcastle, it was minutes.

Living next to the sea has become my escapism. When I feel stressed or anxious, I will go for a walk along the coastline. Listening to the waves crashing against the shore and the smell of the sea instantly calms me down. There is something peaceful about the constant sights, smells and sounds always being there, never changing.



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