



Today's newspaper is tomorrow's fish and chip paper



Fish and chips is a culinary delight most closely associated with, and commonly perceived worldwide, as a popular fast food in England.

The dish consists of fried, battered fish and potato chips, which, unlike French fries, have to be thick. Quality fish and chips is often measured by the freshness of the fish, the crunchiness of the batter and the fluffiness of the chips. A fish and chip shop, or "chippy", is an easily recognised establishment located in every high street in the country. Everyone has their own favourite purveyor of this fare; there is even an annual competition to gain a National Fish and Chip award.

Traditionally wrapped in paper, in the past old newspaper, as it is cheap and helps absorb excess oil, fish and chips is drenched in vinegar and covered in a generous sprinkling of salt before being consumed. Although an excellent example of recycling, fish and chips is no longer wrapped in newspaper for hygiene reasons. Nowadays, it may even be served in not-so-environmentally friendly polystyrene containers. Some connoisseurs have claimed that fish and chips tastes better when wrapped in newspaper!

The saying that "today's newspaper is tomorrow's fish and chip paper" is reflective of its previous usage as a wrapping for this traditional English dish. The expression means that things or items of news that are current and important today are soon worthless and quickly forgotten. Today's newspaper will be used tomorrow to just wrap fish and chips; it is symbolic of the grossly degraded value of old news.

The previous issue of this journal featuring the *Pioneers of Endodontics* from around the world was an opportunity to recognise and pay tribute to the many contributors who have allowed our speciality to advance, thrive and achieve the status it enjoys

today. Lest we forget, it was a timely reminder that the art and science of endodontics benefitted from the valuable input of many, not just a few, and not from just one country, but from all around the world.

I was particularly and personally touched by the inclusion of Fred Harty in the *Pioneers of Endodontics* issue. An indomitable character, Fred's contributions to dentistry, and especially endodontics, are innumerable. It included the establishment of the first group practice limited to endodontics in the UK. Apart from academia, I am privileged to have been a specialist for nearly 30 years in the practice founded by Fred. The Harty Prize is a British Endodontic Society award established in recognition of Fred's many contributions to endodontics.

The advent and pervasive influence of social media may be an attempt to extend the longevity and enjoyment of "15 minutes of fame". However, it may still only last as long as it takes to consume a portion of fish and chips. Social and mass media is fickle, one minute elevating or promoting a person or an issue to widespread attention and the next, in equal measure and with similar vigour, to equally extensive derision.

The cynics may say that nothing lasts forever; fame, fortune or even notoriety. Does it matter? Reading about the achievements and contributions of our predecessors as featured in *Pioneers of Endodontics* is hugely beneficial. History is there to educate, illuminate, enlighten and inspire. As the eminent scientist Isaac Newton said: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

BS Chong