

DURHAM

Spring 2024

County News

www.durham.gov.uk



Get moving

New spring activities

Bishop Auckland Food Festival

Celeb chefs and tasty treats

Culture County

Event highlights for 2024



Welcome

to the spring edition of Durham County News

This edition is filled with exciting dates for your diary.

On pages 16 and 17, you can read all about the return of Bishop Auckland Food Festival this April, where a host of famous faces will share their cookery tips and tricks and you can enjoy lots of tasty treats.

There's inspiration for those wishing to explore the county this spring with Out and About information on pages 14 and 15. There's also our What's On section and a round-up of events and developments to look forward to on pages 12 and 13.

We take a closer look at The Story on pages 8 and 9, ahead of its opening in early summer, and you can also read about inspirational women from across County Durham to mark International Women's Day.

Other featured stories focus on topics including improvements to internet access (page 10), adoption (page 11) and first aid courses (page 25).



Councillor Amanda Hopgood,
Leader of the Council

Amanda Hopgood

Inside...

**Pages 4-7
News**

**Page 11
Adoption**



**Pages 20-21
Towns and Villages**

**Pages 24-25
Wellbeing**

**Pages 8-9
The Story**

**Pages 12-13
Culture highlights**

**Pages 16-17
Bishop Auckland Food Festival**



**Page 22
Improvements in Horden**



**Pages 27-31
What's On**

**Page 10
Digital Durham**



**Pages 18-19
Green News**



**Page 23
Highways**



Front cover image: Sue Fleury takes part in a new Walking Cricket session.

More content is available at www.durham.gov.uk/dcn or scan this code:



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Step back in time this spring

Adventurers can walk in the footsteps of a Roman soldier when one of our family-friendly museums reopens for spring.

Binchester Roman Fort, on the outskirts of Bishop Auckland, offers the chance to explore the remains of an historic fort and bathhouses.

Binchester is open every day between 10am and 4.30pm, from Monday 1 April to Thursday 31 October. Last entry is 4pm.

www.durham.gov.uk/binchester



Date for your diary

Binchester's Roman re-enactment events take place on **Monday 27 May** and **Sunday 25 and Monday 26 August** this year.

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News

20 years of Extra Care

Our Extra Care service, which supports people to live independently as an alternative to moving into a care home, is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

We have six Extra Care sites across the county, combining self-contained apartments with shared lounges and gardens, hair and beauty salons and the option of extra on-site care services when they are needed.

Mary Shaw (92), one of the first residents of Sycamore Lodge Extra Care unit in Spennymoor, joined the celebrations. She said: *"This is a lovely place to live, I have friends here and we enjoy getting together on a Friday, especially when we have fish and chips! The staff really care about us all, they're like family to me."*

Visit www.durham.gov.uk/extracare for more info.



Safe and secure parking

Our three Durham Park and Ride sites have each been awarded Safer Parking Awards by the police.

The sites – at Belmont, Howlands and Sniperley – were assessed for their measures to deter criminal activity and judged to offer a safer environment for both you and your vehicle. Services run from 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday. From April, the Belmont PR1 (Belmont to Sniperley) service will also run on Sundays and Bank Holidays.



Meanwhile, **Durham City's The Sands multi-storey car park** has been awarded Park Mark Plus status, recognising it as one of the country's best modern car parks.

Money off your council tax bill



Residents are being encouraged to check whether they are eligible for a reduction to their council tax bill.

You may be eligible for help if you live alone or are a student, carer, care leaver, apprentice, national traineeship trainee, have a mental impairment, or are 18 years old and still receiving child benefit. People in prison or detention, who have an annexe, or who are suffering hardship may also be eligible.

Visit www.durham.gov.uk/counciltaxdiscounts or call us on 03000 264 000 to find out if you are eligible and how to apply.

You can also request to receive your council tax bill by email – it's good for the environment and means that you'll receive communications from us quicker. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/ebilling to register.

Praise for care leaver support

Our council has been praised by Ofsted inspectors for its work to prepare and support young people as they leave care.



We work closely with care leavers, ensuring they have suitable accommodation and offering advice on education, training, employment, money and personal wellbeing.

Following a two-day inspection focusing on these services, Ofsted inspectors praised our "detailed understanding" of strengths in these service areas and where further improvements can be made. Inspectors also described young people telling them of their "strong and caring relationships" with staff, with many saying they view them as "extended family members".

The full report can be viewed at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>

Flying start for new bus station

Approximately 360,000 people used Durham City's new bus station in its first month of operation.



Passengers praised the transport hub's improved facilities, including segregated toilets, Changing Places toilet and upgraded waiting area seating. Arriva are now based at the station, and neighbourhood warden staff and Durham Constabulary also use the site, which offers a safe and welcoming space for residents and visitors alike.

Supporting local bus services

We know buses can be a lifeline for people without cars, helping them get to work, health appointments and leisure activities.

That is why as a local authority we are continuing to support local services which would otherwise be unviable. This coming year we will be using over £2.5 million from the concessionary fares budget to secure services on some of the routes that residents rely on.



Improving walking, riding and cycling routes

We've updated our plans to improve access to the county's beautiful countryside.

Our refreshed **Rights of Way Improvement Plan** sets out how we will invest in our Public Rights of Way network of footpaths, bridleways, and byways, to make them more accessible and easier to use.

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/prow

We've also created **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans**, which identify improvements that can encourage more people to commute to work or school on foot or by bike.

We now have 11 plans for Bishop Auckland, Chester le Street, Consett, Crook, Durham City, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Sildon and Stanley.

Find out more about our walking and cycling improvements at www.durham.gov.uk/activetravel

Whorlton Bridge restoration update

Work to dismantle the historic Whorlton Bridge in Barnard Castle will get underway this month as part of its restoration. VolkerLaser has been appointed as the main contractor for the scheme and we have been granted consent from Historic England to start work.

Opened in July 1831, the Grade II-listed structure and Scheduled Monument is the UK's oldest road suspension bridge and also the UK's earliest surviving iron chained suspension bridge.

The bridge was closed in 2019 for the public's safety after a routine assessment identified it was no longer able to support the weight of vehicles or pedestrians. This month we will begin to dismantle the bridge, carefully removing, cataloguing, inspecting, and repairing the 1,800 individual components. Bored piles will be installed on the north and south abutments, foundations will be excavated and a new hanger tuning system will be introduced to allow better maintenance of the structure.

For further information and the latest updates on Whorlton Bridge, visit www.durham.gov.uk/whorltonbridge



Fact box:

- ★ We look after almost 1,500 highway 'bridge' structures, including 463 road bridges, 508 footbridges, 11 fords, 35 subways and a viaduct.
- ★ 2023 marked the 60th anniversary of the Grade I listed Kingsgate Footbridge designed by Sir Ove Arup.
- ★ Newton Cap is our longest highway bridge at 225 metres.
- ★ Framwellgate Bridge is Durham's oldest bridge, constructed in 1127 by Bishop Flambard.
- ★ The Causey Arch bridge, near Stanley, is the oldest surviving single-arch railway bridge in the world.
- ★ In December 1942, Prime Minister Winston Churchill stood on Whorlton Bridge to watch as soldiers trained in the meadows on the south bank, wading through the river Tees then tackling the steep Durham cliffs.

Photo: Richard Laidler

Use your vote



There are big changes ahead for the region this year – an historic devolution deal means decisions normally taken in London will soon be made here in the region.

The deal, which could be worth up to £4.2 billion over 30 years, includes devolved power for decisions on issues including transport, skills, housing and regeneration. The new combined authority is also expected to lead to an extra 24,000 jobs and unlock an additional £5 billion in private sector investment.

The deal covers the seven council areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. But there's no change to the way the councils will operate – this is about extra funding and powers across the whole area.

Each council will have a representative on the Cabinet of the new combined authority and most decisions will be voted on by a **new elected mayor** and the rest of the Cabinet, decided by a simple majority.

A statutory order has been laid before Parliament. Once the order is approved, there will be an election for a North East Mayor on **Thursday 2 May**.

The Mayor will lead a new combined authority and work with the councils for the next four years to champion the North East to the UK and the world.

That's why your vote is important. You'll be seeing and hearing more about the forthcoming mayoral election between now and May as well as getting information through your door.

Find out more at www.devolutionnortheast.com

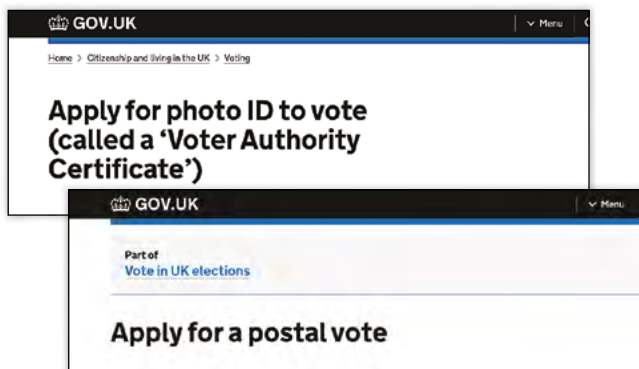
Are you ready?

Police and Crime Commissioner elections are also due to take place across County Durham on **Thursday 2 May** and the next UK Parliamentary General Election must be held before the end of January 2025.

Remember to make sure you are registered to vote ahead of the elections and have the appropriate photo ID to show at the polling station.

Accepted ID include passports, photo driving licences and concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass. Expired IDs will be accepted if the voter is still recognisable from the photo. A full list of accepted IDs can be found at www.gov.uk

If you do not have an accepted form of ID, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate online at www.voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk



You can also apply for a postal vote online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or proxy vote online at www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote You will need your national insurance number to apply.

Paper application forms are available by calling **03000 261 212** or emailing electoralservices@durham.gov.uk

Borrow a Bike for free

If you would like to start cycling to work, our Borrow a Bike scheme could help you get started.

The scheme runs in Shildon, Newton Hall, Framwellgate Moor, Brasside, Pity Me, Stanley, Murton, Seaham, Newton Aycliffe, Chester-le-Street, Bishop Auckland and Meadowfield.

If you live or work in one of these areas, you could be entitled to borrow a bike for up to three months with the option to buy a discounted bike at the end of it. Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/borrowabike

You can also access 12 new maps covering cycle routes in these areas. Pick up a copy from our libraries and leisure centres or download one at www.durham.gov.uk/wheretocycle





Celebrating women's stories

County Durham's past is full of remarkable stories about ordinary people who achieved extraordinary feats.

To mark International Women's Day, we look back at women whose bravery, talent and compassion remain an inspiration to us all.

International Women's Day (Friday 8 March) is a celebration of the achievements of women, past and present. It's a rallying cry for us all to strive for a gender equal world, and a plea to never forget the triumphs and sacrifices of past generations.

In County Durham, there is a collective commitment from our council, parish councils, the County Durham Women's Banner Group and many other organisations to honour historic women. Along with exhibitions and research into women's lives, a series of blue plaques have been installed across the county and there are more to come.

Here are some of the women honoured so far.



Aycliffe Angel Gladys Stoddart presenting Winston Churchill with a cigar. DCRO D_X1822_23

The Aycliffe Angels were a group of courageous women who worked at a Second World War munitions factory in Newton Aycliffe. Their work was vital to the war effort and very dangerous, with many workers killed or injured during the manufacturing process. However, the secrecy surrounding the factory meant many incidents went unrecorded, and the women's efforts were not recognised. Durham County Record Office holds many documents about the Aycliffe Angels, including a cutting from *The Northern Echo* about Prime Minister Winston Churchill's visit to the factory in 1942. The plaque is situated at the former factory site, now known as ROF 51.



Kate Maxey

Born in 1876, **Kate Maxey** became one of the most highly decorated nurses of the First World War, receiving the Royal Red 1st Class, the Military Medal and the Florence Nightingale Medal in acknowledgement of her distinguished service. The plaque can be found on her former home in Clyde Terrace in Spennymoor.

In 2014, Durham County Record Office led a centenary project to tell the story of Durham and its people in the First World War. Kate Maxey is one of those featured on the resulting Durham at War website: www.durhamatwar.org.uk



The Aycliffe Angels filled shells and bullets and assembled detonators and fuses. *The Northern Echo*



Daisy Edis.
Beamish, The Living Museum of the North

Daisy Edis was born in 1888 and started working at her father's photography studio in Durham City in 1901. Daisy went on to become a pioneering professional photographer, exhibiting her work across the world. Beamish, The Living Museum of the North has more than 500 photographs by Daisy and her father, John Edis. A replica of their photography studio at 52 Saddler Street can also be found in the museum's 1900 Town. Daisy's plaque can be found at 142 Gilesgate, where she used to live.



Janet Taylor was born in Wolsingham in 1804 and was educated in languages, mathematics, science, astronomy and navigation by her schoolmaster father.

She went on to set up a nautical academy and specialised in the design, production and repair of navigational instruments. Janet's plaque is located at the Masonic Hall in Wolsingham.



Ruth Ross, the granddaughter of Jack and Bella.

Lady Bella Lawson was a suffragist, activist, community volunteer and pioneer of child welfare clinics. She was also a parish councillor, school manager and a supporter of many charities. Bella was honoured along with her husband Baron Jack Lawson, with the blue plaque installed on their former home in Woodside, Beamish.



Daisy Edis presents trophies to Durham Photographic Society members for a portrait competition in 1953. Beamish, The Living Museum of the North

Mary Gibson, Dora Heslop and Winifred Hindmarch, were the three first female graduates of Durham University in 1898. The women attended the College of St Hild, now part of the College of St Hild and St Bede, where the plaque is located.



More fascinating stories await at new venue

Work is almost complete on The Story, the new world-class attraction which will bring together five historic collections for the first time. Due to open on Friday 14 June, the venue will provide a unique gateway to explore the whole history of County Durham and its people.

Our archive staff have packed and moved almost six miles of archives charting 900 years of local history to the new building. The final phase of construction work is underway on the facility, which will also offer a new home for the Durham register office and an elegant wedding/civil ceremony venue, able to welcome up to 100 guests.

Visitors will soon be able to visit permanent and temporary exhibitions that explore the history of the county through historic records, photographs and objects for free. The exhibitions will bring to life the fascinating history of Durham from pre-history through to the modern day, alongside an exciting activity programme with storytelling sessions, kids' takeover days, behind the scenes tours, volunteering opportunities and community projects.

The Story will also provide the permanent home for the DLI Collection, reuniting the object collection with the DLI Archive for the first time since 1996. The DLI Collection will be housed, stored, cared for, and curated at the site.



Find out more about The Story at www.thestorydurham.org

Getting rural residents online

More than 1,500 homes and businesses in Teesdale can now benefit from full fibre broadband, as Project Gigabit reaches its first milestone in County Durham.

The government's £5 billion programme is improving infrastructure in rural communities to enable areas which are not covered by any commercial plans to access fast, reliable gigabit-capable broadband.

During the first phase of the roll-out, premises in Barnard Castle, Middleton-in-Teesdale and Winston were given access to this next generation technology.

Our Digital Durham team has been working closely with Building Digital UK and contractors GoFibre to support the roll-out, which is expected to continue into 2025.



Michael and Sheila Wylie

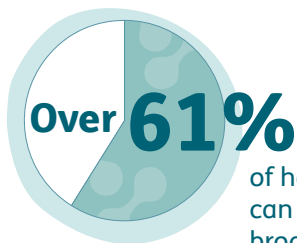
Teesdale residents can register their interest in GoFibre's full fibre broadband at www.gofibre.co.uk

The speed and reliability of full fibre broadband were the main motivators for Michael who now benefits from download speeds of 100 Mbps.

"Having good internet access is vital in supporting the voluntary work we carry out," Michael added. "As chair of Scarth Hall, it is important that I am able to contact outside bodies such as the charity commission, and the licensing authority when needed."

"Filling in forms online has also made my life a lot easier. Basically, my life is easier with a lot less hassle."

To read Michael's full story, find out more about Project Gigabit or find information on digital support, visit www.digitaldurham.org



of homes and businesses can access gigabit capable broadband with further activity planned to increase coverage in County Durham.

Michael Wylie was one of the first Teesdale residents to benefit from the new network.

After discovering that he was only achieving a speed of 1.6 Megabits per second (Mbps) through his old service, he attended a GoFibre community event at Scarth Hall in Staindrop.

"As trustees of Scarth Hall we knew the broadband roll-out was happening, so went along and discussed it with Durham County Council staff and GoFibre sales and engineering staff. This only strengthened our resolve to take up what was being offered," Michael said.

Adopting our daughter is “a dream come true”

There are lots of reasons that lead people to the decision to adopt.

In Sean and Kelly’s case, their decision came after experiencing fertility issues and going through unsuccessful fertility treatment. They’re now the proud parents of a little girl they adopted just before her first birthday.



“Adoption was always an option,” said Sean. “When our fertility treatment didn’t work, we decided to look into it.

“We searched online and found Adopt Coast to Coast. We read about other people’s experience of adopting with them, which helped us to decide to start the process with them.”

Adopt Coast to Coast is our Regional Adoption Agency and supports adoptive parents every step of the way.

“The process was good – more enjoyable than we expected,” said Sean. “The hardest part was waiting for checks and references.

“Our social worker at the time was really reassuring and helpful. They never raised expectations and were open and honest throughout the process.



“The process was good – more enjoyable than we expected...”

“We also took part in training where we made some really good friends who had similar experiences to us.

“When we were eventually told that we can be parents, it was like a dream come true.”

Kelly added: “We had lots of information about our daughter before we met her, so we felt like we really knew her and on our introduction day she took to us quite quickly. By the end of our meeting, we were getting cuddles.

“I’d say if anyone is thinking of adopting, it can be a long process but it’s so worth it. If you’ve got questions or are unsure, make a phone call and find out more. Many of the things we worried about turned out to be nothing in the end.”



adopt
Coast to Coast

Dedicated to finding homes for the babies and children in their care, Adopt Coast to Coast, the regional adoption agency for Durham, and Together for Children (Sunderland) are calling for more people to explore adoption as a way to start or grow their families.

Adopt Coast to Coast is urgently seeking adopters for children who usually wait longer for their forever home – such as:

- those over four years old
- groups of brothers and sisters
- children with learning difficulties, health complications, or disabilities
- children from ethnic minorities

They welcome applications from all walks of life, including single people and couples, applicants from the LGBTQ+ community and those with biological children.



If you feel you can offer a loving home to one or more children, Adopt Coast to Coast hosts two online information events each month – book a space or find out more at www.adoptcoasttocoast.org.uk or call 03000 268 268.

A year of fun, food and festivals in Durham, The Culture County

This year is set to be an exciting one for County Durham, with a packed programme of festivals and events.

But, what's more, there will also be new attractions opening and incredible developments at existing ones – all helping to attract more visitors to our area.

With so much happening, 2024 is set to further cement Durham's position as the 'Culture County'.

Discover some of this year's highlights:

Bishop Auckland Food Festival

Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April

Matt Tebbutt and Cyrus Todiwala will join other big names as one of the country's top food festivals returns. Enjoy tasty treats from a fantastic range of street food traders and artisan producers, as well as pop up cafés and entertainment. See more on pages 16 and 17. www.bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk

Durham Pride

Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May

Durham Pride returns to the Sands Field in Durham with an amazing weekend of entertainment and fun, including fairground rides, food and drink tents, stalls and a children's farm. Saturday is Pride in Armed Forces Day celebrating LGBT+ personnel past and present, while Sunday sees a march through Durham City, which will end on the Sands with performances by acts, including JLS star Aston Merrygold. www.durhamprideuk.org



Durham Regatta

Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 June

A weekend of thrilling competitive rowing and bank-side entertainment, along with a great selection of stalls to browse and local foods.

www.durham-regatta.org.uk



BRASS Festival

Friday 5 to Saturday 13 July

This year promises another fantastic line-up of brilliant brass bands and musicians from across the world. The week will be packed with spectacular performances, new commissions, free concerts, community activities and lively street bands.

www.brassfestival.co.uk



Durham Miners' Gala

Saturday 13 July

The annual Big Meeting has been held on the second Saturday of July in Durham City since 1871. Each year, more than 200,000 people march as part of Britain's biggest celebration of trade union and community values.

www.friendsofdurhamminersgala.org



Durham City Run Festival

Thursday 18 to Saturday 20 July

Take on the historic streets of Durham in a series of races as part of Durham City Run Festival, which includes events for all ages.

www.durhamcityrun.com

Kynren - An Epic Tale of England

Every Saturday from 27 July to 14 September

The award-winning night-time show returns to Bishop Auckland for another spectacular summer season.

www.11arches.com



Seaham Food Festival

Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 August

The Durham Coast hosts delicious street food, cookery classes, live music, TV chefs and tasty local produce.

www.seahamfoodfestival.co.uk

Heritage Open Days



Friday 6 to Sunday 15 September

Visit cultural venues across the county in a celebration of heritage, community and history. Enjoy a wide range of tours, events, and activities, with free entry to venues and attractions that usually charge for admission.

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

England v Australia ODI

Tuesday 24 September

England men's team take on Australia at the home of Durham Cricket, Chester-le-Street's Riverside Stadium.

www.durhamcricket.co.uk

North Pennines Stargazing Festival

October

Unlock the wonders of the night sky with 'out of this world' activities and events suitable for stargazers of all ages, whether you're a beginner or expert.

www.northpennines.org.uk

Growing the Culture County



The Rising at Raby Castle

Ambitious renovations and developments are underway at Raby Castle to create a visitor destination unlike any other. The Rising is due to be completed this spring and will include reimagined walled gardens, restored heritage buildings, stylish shopping and the new Vinery Restaurant showcasing local produce.



Locomotion

Locomotion is investing in new experiences, buildings and interpretation to enhance how the story of Shildon, and its contribution to the development of railways worldwide, is told. In spring 2024, the opening of New Hall will create the largest collection of historic rail vehicles under cover and on one site anywhere in the world.



Remaking Beamish

The incredible developments at Beamish, The Living Museum of the North continue. This year, new additions to the 1950s Town will include a toy shop, electrical store and much-anticipated cinema. Visitors will also be able to stay overnight for the first time in Georgian themed accommodation, with a tavern and pottery also due to open in 2024.



Redhills

The Grade II listed Redhills Durham Miners' Hall, home of the Pitman's Parliament, will open later this year. Redhills dates back to 1915 and was paid for by more than 100,000 working miners to create a democratic hub where collective decisions could be made for the good of the Durham Coalfield. When it reopens, you can learn about its fascinating history through tours, and enjoy events, conferences and weddings.



The Story

The Grade II listed Mount Oswald Manor House is currently being transformed into The Story, a world class facility that will be home to some of the county's most important heritage collections and a place for life-changing events. The Story will let you discover the past, celebrate the present, and create the future of Durham. Find out more about the new attraction, which is set to open this summer, on page 8.

Find out more about what's happening across the culture county at www.thisisdurham.com

Enjoy the outdoors this spring

Spring is a great time to shake off those winter cobwebs and make the most of County Durham's picturesque countryside and green spaces. Here are some top reasons to get outdoors.



Get fit and get social

Our guided walks are a great way to meet new friends, get moving and learn all about the county's historical and geological heritage. May is also National Walking Month, so a perfect time to try a new route.

Everyone is welcome and there is no need to book. There are walks to suit all abilities, including short, easy walks and long hard hikes, with prices starting at £4. Well-behaved dogs are welcome on most walks, so feel free to bring your four-legged-friend, as long as they're kept on a short lead.

Future organised walks include Causey Arch, one of the oldest surviving single arch railway bridges in the world, on Wednesday 27 March, and the farms north of Waskerley Station on Friday 29 March.

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/guidedwalks

Living Streets, the charity for everyday walking, is encouraging as many people as possible to fit at least 20 minutes walking into their daily routine during National Walking Month and beyond.

There are mental and physical benefits to regular walking and Living Streets has tips to encourage everyone to get walking (or wheeling for those in a wheelchair), including:

- ✓ Inviting friends to walk with you
- ✓ Organising a walking meeting
- ✓ Walking to work, where possible
- ✓ Adding an evening stroll into your routine

Discover the coast with a free app

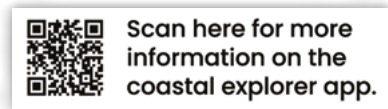
A newly launched app can help you discover more about the beautiful north east coastline, with fun facts to explore.

The app has been developed as part of the SeaScapes project, which encourages people to visit the coast. It sends notifications directly to your mobile phone when you pass places of interest along the King Charles III English Coast Path between the Tyne and Tees rivers.

As you approach key locations along the coast, the app will 'ping' to tell you information about shipwrecks, the area's fascinating wildlife, and interesting facts about past industrial sites, such as Seaham bottle works and Second World War defences.

You can record your own observations too by using the app's Journal mode to log information you have seen and learnt on your visit.

To download the app, scan the QR code below or on interpretation signs along the coastal path.



You can find out more about the project at www.explorescapes.co.uk

SeaScapes
Tyne to Tees, shores and seas



Head to the park

Our parks offer the perfect place for the kids to let off some steam while the grown ups relax with a cuppa in one of our cosy cafés.

We look after parks across the county, boasting a range of facilities, including:

Hardwick Park near Sedgefield and **Wharton Park** in Durham City, which both offer fun-packed play areas, accessible walkways and visitor centres boasting cafés that offer hot and cold drinks, sweet treats, light lunches, and toilet facilities. Both parks also host a wide range of family friendly activities and events throughout the year, from craft sessions to story time, outdoor adventures to woodland workshops.



Children’s play areas in **Blackhill and Consett Park** were upgraded with new play equipment and safety surfaces in 2021 to provide a range of play equipment suitable for children of differing ages and abilities.

We also help look after parks in **Annfield Plain, Coxhoe, Bishop Auckland, Sherburn and Stanley**.

Facilities vary across the parks, but include tennis courts, bowling greens, football pitches, play equipment and BMX/skate parks.

Chester-le-Street’s **Riverside Park** is a great place to stretch your legs along the River Wear or stop for a picnic. With its ornamental gardens, large play areas, outdoor exercise equipment and exciting splash pad, there’s plenty to keep the whole family entertained.

Visit www.durham.gov.uk/parks to find out more.



Do Durham Differently

This is Durham’s ‘Do Durham Differently’ campaign showcases some of the county’s incredible experiences, award-winning attractions, exciting events and fantastic food and drink.

From cycling and stargazing, to fascinating museums and the best spots to experience nature in all its glory, visit www.thisisdurham.com/differently for some great suggestions for fun days out across the county.

Do Durham differently



Image: Visit County Durham

Image: Visit County Durham

Find more inspiration to get outdoors at www.durham.gov.uk/enjoyoutdoors

A flavour filled weekend

Bishop Auckland Food Festival returns next month with an exciting menu of top chefs, tasty treats and family fun.

The town's market place will once again be packed with the region's best food and drink producers, with around 150 stalls serving up delicious street food and yummy goodies.

There's something for everyone, with a wide range of cuisines on offer, including vegan and gluten-free options, live cookery demonstrations fronted by famous faces, cookery workshops and activities for the kids. Both days will be filled with family fun too, with live music, street art and performances.

Bishop Auckland's MasterChef contender, **Mike Bartley** returns, with a four-course menu during a pop-up dining experience at Bishop Auckland Town Hall on Saturday 20 April at 7pm. Tickets are limited and priced at £42 per person.

North Tyneside Steel Band and Rock Choir will be bringing the music, along with crowd favourite Granny Turismo. Look out also for Daphne and Leia, the prize winning, psychic Daffodil and Leek, plus comedy chefs Hugh Fearn and Lee Whittingstall who'll present a cookery demonstration like no other from their mobile kitchen garden.

For all the latest news, visit www.bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk and follow Bishop Auckland Food Festival on Facebook, Instagram and X (Twitter).



Saturday 20 and
Sunday 21 April



What's on the menu?

Festival MC Chris Bavin will take the stage as a bunch of famous faces demonstrate their cookery skills. The programme includes:

Saturday 20 April

★ Henry Firth and Ian Theasby – the visionary duo behind vegan and plant-based cooking sensation **BOSH!** Henry and Ian have written six Sunday Times bestselling cookbooks and are followed by millions around the world on social media. Their authentic and relatable approach has brought plant-based cooking into the mainstream, inspiring viewers to explore the vibrant world of plant-based cuisine.

★ Great British Bake Off 2023 finalist **Dan Hunter** began his cookery journey when he went travelling in South America in 2007. A passion for pies and desserts, inspired by his mother-in-law's teachings in how to make the perfect shortcrust pastry, has evolved into a penchant for patisserie. Perfectionist Dan loves a baking challenge and will often find the hardest bake in his collection of more than 300 cookbooks and start there, throwing everything he's got at creating a masterpiece.

★ Restaurateur and cookery school owner **Marcus Bean** is a self-taught chef, whose passion for cooking helped him win Iron Chef UK in 2010 on Channel 4. At his cookery school he inspires budding chefs of all ages to experiment more, create their own dishes and master new techniques.

Sunday 21 April

★ TV presenter, author, food writer and award-winning restaurateur, **Matt Tebbutt** is known to many as the presenter of BBC shows Saturday Kitchen and Best Bites. His show Food Unwrapped is now in its eighth series. He has written three cookery books featuring his favourite recipes and is a regular contributor to food and travel magazines.

★ Chef, author and entrepreneur, **Cyrus Todiwala** founded his restaurant Café Spice Namaste, in London in the 1990s, helping reshape Britain's then limited expectations of Indian cuisine and inspiring generations of Indian chefs. He is a staunch advocate of education and training, social responsibility, sustainability, buying British, food waste, the environment and healthy eating. He has written six cookbooks and appears regularly on BBC Saturday Kitchen and the James Martin Saturday Morning programme.

★ **Meliz Berg** is a food content creator, bestselling author and presenter. Her first book, Meliz's Kitchen, became an immediate Sunday Times number 1 Bestseller when it was released in June 2022. Her easy-to-follow recipes are full of addictive combinations of flavours and spices, highlighting a melting-pot of beautiful cuisines from across the Mediterranean, Balkans and Middle East. Meliz, who has appeared on ITV This Morning and Channel 4's Steph's Packed Lunch, shares her unique and wholesome recipes on her ever-growing Instagram page Meliz Cooks.



Summer opening at HWRCs

From Monday 1 April, our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) will move to extended opening hours.

Annfield Plain, Heighington, Hett Hills, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Potterhouse Lane, Romanway, Seaham, Stainton Grove and Tudhoe

- Monday to Sunday – 9am to 6pm

Coxhoe, Horden and Thornley

- Monday to Thursday – 10am to 4pm
- Friday – closed
- Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays – 9am to 6pm

These opening hours will remain in place until the end of September.

Frosterley will remain open from 9am to noon every second Saturday.

Visit www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc for more information.



Tell us about green spaces

We're encouraging residents to help shape the future of green spaces across the county by sharing their views as part of a new study developed by Durham University.

Your feedback will provide a greater understanding as to how you view the future of green spaces and how we should manage them. Green spaces include railway paths, grassed open spaces, nature reserves and wooded areas.

The survey takes as little as ten minutes to complete.



SCAN HERE

Big Spring Clean

This year's Big Spring Clean takes place between Monday 12 February and Friday 5 April.

We're encouraging community groups to get involved. Why not organise a community clean up or litter pick?

Our Civic Pride team can loan you litter-picking equipment to get you started. Get in touch at civicpride@durham.gov.uk



Bank Holiday bins



There will be no change to bin collection days this spring or during the Easter Bank holiday. Our crews will be working as normal on Good Friday, so please leave your bin out before 7am as usual if Friday is your normal collection day.

Find your collection day at www.durham.gov.uk/doitonline

Sign up for garden waste collections

There's still time to sign up for this year's garden waste collection scheme.

The price this year remains at £38 and eligible properties will be sent an email or letter with sign up details. Once you've signed up you will be sent a collection calendar with your dates and a sticker to place on your bin.



www.durham.gov.uk/gardenwaste



Compost bin and water butt offers

Did you know that investing in a compost bin or water butt can save you money and improve your garden?

You can grab a discount on both items if you live in County Durham. More details are available on our website www.durham.gov.uk/composting



Community action in Annfield Plain

Our Community Action Team will be tackling environmental issues in Annfield Plain this spring.

Following a successful project in Cockton Hill, Bishop Auckland, before Christmas, the team will spend 11 weeks in the north of the county.

As well as promoting health and healthier lifestyles, the team consults with those who live and work in an area in order to understand the issues and priorities that matter most to residents.

Officers work with police and other colleagues, including neighbourhood wardens, to tackle problems such as flytipping, untidy yards and anti-social behaviour. The team uses enforcement powers to encourage owners, occupiers and landlords to take responsibility for their local neighbourhood.

The scheme moves around the county, but ensures the impact of work carried out continues in each area beyond the project dates, so residents enjoy longer term benefits.

The team will be visiting Annfield Plain between Monday 4 March and Sunday 19 May.

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/CAT



Recycle small electricals

We're working with Material Focus, an independent not-for-profit organisation, to ensure household electricals are recycled properly rather than hoarded or thrown in the rubbish bin.

You can drop off your items at any of our collection points, which are located in community buildings across the county.

We also have free repair cafés, where experts from County Durham Furniture Help Scheme will try to breathe life into broken items.

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/weee



Investing in communities

We continue to work alongside our partners to help bring new life to towns and villages across the county.

Through our Towns and Villages programme, we're helping to improve communities. We're doing this by supporting retail businesses and bringing new jobs to the area, through a number of different schemes all of which focus on improving what our county has to offer.



New business start-up support

Calling all entrepreneurs! A new **Retail Start Up Grant** is now available to support County Durham retail and hospitality businesses in their first six months of trading.

The grant is part of our Towns and Villages programme. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Retail Start Up Grant can be used to cover costs such as rent, business rates, service charges, utilities and insurances.

The amount of funding awarded is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the needs, location and circumstances of each business.

For more information visit, www.durham.gov.uk/helpwithbusinessfunding

Sources of support

The Retail Start Up Grant is just one of a range of schemes through which we offer funding and support to the county's businesses. Other schemes include:

- The **Targeted Business Improvement Scheme** provides funding to help improve premises. Grants are available to help support new businesses into a premise and existing businesses to expand, as well as to bring derelict buildings or underused retail units back into use.
- The **Property Reuse and Conversion Loan Scheme** offers interest-free loans to both owners and tenants in areas of high vacancy rates. These loans must be used towards the purchase and improvement of derelict or vacant properties for commercial, leisure or retail use.
- The **Retail Hub** offers free training to help independent retail and hospitality businesses grow, increase sales and improve their resilience. Training includes customer service and sales, digital media, developing teamwork and dementia awareness, along with Level 2 and 3 certificates in a range of subjects.
- The **Meanwhile Uses Grant** is part of the Retail Hub and provides funding to support shared retail spaces and the establishment of temporary retail, leisure and hospitality offerings in vacant town centre properties during gaps between tenancies.

Our community economic development team can offer financial support as well as information, advice and guidance for retail and hospitality businesses in County Durham.

To find out more, contact ced@durham.gov.uk or visit www.durham.gov.uk/retail



Targeted Business Improvement Scheme

Gills Fry, Horden

Creation of a new multi-cuisine takeaway occupying two residential units. Twenty full time jobs and private investment of £500,000.

Fusha, Silver Street, Durham City

New Asian fusion restaurant, creating eight full time jobs and attracting private investment of more than £100,000.

My Dog Barber, Chester-le-Street

Safeguarding seven full time jobs.

Sweet Things, Consett

Three full time jobs created.

Mint Business Club, Consett

The HUB shop is now home to over 50 local independent retail businesses.

Improving Community Resilience

Funding of £1.2 million is helping make our communities more resilient – and more sociable.

Cash from our **Improving Community Resilience** project is available to support communities in addressing issues of concern. The aim is to protect, maintain and enhance our communities as well as boosting their resilience.

To date, 12 projects from across the county have been awarded a total of £1.2 million to support the conservation and re-development of buildings, installation of energy saving measures and disabled access improvements.

By helping to reduce loneliness and social isolation, creating jobs and volunteering opportunities, and creating opportunities to gain new skills, these projects are helping to get more people involved in community life. This will have a knock-on effect on mental and physical health across the county.



www.durham.gov.uk/townsandvillages

Making improvements in Horden

Our plans to invest more than £6 million to kickstart the regeneration of Horden have taken a step forward, with phase one of a masterplan for the area now approved.

Funding, including £4.5 million from our Towns and Villages programme, will be used to purchase properties on Third Street. This will pave the way for three possible options: the houses to be redeveloped to provide high quality housing; the houses to be demolished and new properties built in their place; a mix of the two.

We are also continuing our efforts to identify funding sources that could finance wider regeneration activity within Horden.

Through the Horden Masterplan, we are seeking to transform housing provision in the community.

Our long-term goal is to transform Horden's terraced streets by addressing numbers of empty homes and private landlords and supporting those with housing needs.

The delivery of the masterplan involves replacing existing housing at the Numbered Streets with new homes, as well as improved walking and cycling routes to Peterlee town centre, Horden train station and the Durham Heritage Coast.

These proposals have been subject to extensive consultation with residents in affected areas and those



living nearby. Strong support has been received for the demolition and clearance of the Numbered Streets, and comprehensive regeneration.

Significant resources will be required over a prolonged period to deliver the masterplan in full.

However, we have committed £6.2 million, including the £4.5 million Towns and Villages money, to kickstart regeneration in Horden, and to demonstrate our commitment to revitalising the community.

A phasing and delivery plan has been developed, subject to funding being available. As part of this, phase one proposes the acquisition



of houses on Third Street, funded with the £6.2 million and paving the way for either redevelopment, demolition and new build, or a mix of the two.



These proposals were subject to public engagement in September and October of last year and have now been approved.

A comprehensive rehousing strategy has been developed for those affected in the initial phase of acquisition, which will explore all available housing options for residents. We will work closely with them to identify their housing needs and requirements for alternative housing. We will also work with residents to find suitable alternative accommodation where appropriate or to assist them in securing their own accommodation elsewhere.

Cracking pothole problems

Early spring is 'pothole season', when roads damaged by freezing and thawing during winter give in to the pressure of traffic, resulting in newly formed potholes.

This year we will spend approximately £18 million on preventative and reactive maintenance treatments on our roads, including carriageway resurfacing, structural patching and pothole repairs.

How do we look after our roads?

We have a statutory duty to inspect and maintain the highway network in a safe and serviceable condition. We are responsible for most highways and footpaths in County Durham, with the exception of private roads or the A66 and the A1, which are both maintained by Highways England.

What happens when you report a pothole?

You can report potholes or other issues with roads or footpaths by calling **03000 26 0000** or visiting www.durham.gov.uk/potholes

You'll need your contact details, a description of the pothole, its exact location, and a photo if possible. We prioritise filling potholes depending on how severe they are and the risk they pose.

How do we repair potholes?

Last year we repaired over 6,500 potholes. We use a variety of methods for repairing potholes, which include:

Spray injection patching

Spray injection jet patching is used between April and September. High-powered patching equipment uses a bitumen emulsion to fill up to 150 potholes a day, taking just two minutes each, making it highly efficient and cost-effective.

Structural patching

Structural patching happens all year round. A patching crew excavates to remove all failed areas of carriageway, replacing with asphalt which is compacted with a roller. This technique is a permanent repair.

Mastic asphalt

This is a product which is new to the market. It provides the opportunity to repair shallow potholes without the need for excavation, providing a cost effective, durable permanent repair. It also reduces carbon emissions.



Preventative maintenance treatments

In addition to the reactive pothole repairs, we also undertake planned resurfacing works incorporating a number of different treatments. These treatments include:

- carriageway resurfacing - various products
- surface dressing
- micro asphalt

Each of the above techniques are selected to ensure the right treatment is provided at the right time, thereby ensuring long-term cost-effective solutions.



Fact:

The name pothole can be traced back to the Roman Empire, when potters would dig clay from the road to make their pots, leaving deep ruts to negotiate.



A happy and healthy new year

Whether it's taking up a new hobby, learning first aid skills or helping share health advice, there are lots of things you can do this year to improve your physical and mental health.



Get crafty

A craft and social group is making a big difference to people's lives in Bishop Auckland.

The Crafty Crafters creative health and wellbeing group was set up by County Durham-based arts charity Northern Heartlands.



Every week the group welcomes a professional artist to lead a creative session focusing on a different creative skill – from woodwork and jewellery-making to printing and animation.

Originally funded by Believe Housing, the group has been able to continue thanks to funding from Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership and our council.

Set up in response to a need identified by NHS Social Prescribing Link Workers, the group helps those living with issues such as loneliness, isolation, anxiety and mild depression. For some people, it can be the only time they venture out of the house, making it a vital lifeline for them.

The group is free to attend – although donations are welcome – and open to people of all ages. Sessions run every Thursday from 1pm to 3pm at The Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland.

Contact info@northernheartlands.org or phone 01833 200 220 for more information.



Become a Community Champion

Could you play a part in helping your community stay healthy?

Our Community Champions programme is looking for new recruits to help people in County Durham live longer, healthier and happier lives.

If you are over 18, live in County Durham and have an interest in health and wellbeing, you could be just who we are looking for.

Community Champions help people stay up to date with the latest public health information, including guidance on protecting and improving our health.

Stephen McCallan, who is already part of the scheme, said: *"Being a Community Champion makes me feel like a valued member of my community. If you're looking for ways to get out and about, meet new people and make a positive difference in your community, becoming a Community Champion is a great way to do it."*

Volunteers will be supported with regular updates and free training. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/cdtcommunitychampions to learn more.



Move more with new activities

If you're thinking about getting active, it can often be difficult to know where to start.

Our Move programme offers a wide range of activities to try, including some great new options such as walking football, cricket and netball.

These sessions are designed for anyone looking for a fun activity in a relaxed, supportive and friendly environment. All ages and abilities are welcome – and you don't need to have played before to take part.

Our popular gentle and seated exercise classes and free group walks, meanwhile, also continue and are a fantastic way to meet new friends and get moving.

You can view the full programme of activities at www.thriveleisure.co.uk

Our aim is to make sure that everyone, no matter their circumstances, can move more as part of their everyday life. Move's dedicated one-to-one support service allows you to discuss your personal requirements, receive tailored advice and find local activities to suit you.

Enquire online at www.thriveleisure.co.uk



Learn First Aid

A nursery worker helped save the life of a child in her care thanks to skills she learned on a first aid course.

Early years practitioner Sarah Kirkwood, who works at the Louisa Centre Stanley, attended a two-day paediatric first aid course with DurhamLearn.

It was not long after that Sarah put her newly acquired skills into practice when a small child in the nursery where she works choked whilst eating their lunch.

Thanks to her training, Sarah was instantly able to recognise the signs of choking and was able to react quickly. Following the procedure she'd learnt on our course, Sarah managed to clear the obstruction and save the child's life.

"The course made me more confident and able to think quickly and perform what I had been taught," Sarah said. "I feel much more competent in tackling first aid situations."

The course Sarah attended covers a range of first aid emergencies and results in a qualification which lasts for three years.

Students are involved in learning basic life support, dealing with a choking casualty, and managing bleeding as well as learning about illnesses and management of minor injuries.

The course is just one of a range offered by DurhamLearn, which also includes First Aid at Work.

Find out more at

www.durham.gov.uk/durhamlearncourses
or by calling 03000 266 115.





Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership

Amos lives in a care home, staff often ignore him when he asks for help.

If you are concerned that an adult is being neglected or abused call **03000 267 979** or **999** if they are in immediate danger.

www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info



Selective Licensing of privately rented properties

Since April 2022, private landlords have been required to obtain a licence to legally rent their properties in selected areas of the county.

About 42% of the private rented sector is covered and you can check if a property is included at www.durham.gov.uk/selectivelicensing



The licence fee is a maximum of £500, per property, for the length of the five-year scheme.

For more information, please contact:
Telephone: **03000 268 000** (press option 2)
Email: selectivelicensing@durham.gov.uk



Selective Licensing



Cracking Easter theatre for families

Explosive science, dramatic dance and a CBeebies star – Gala Durham has lots to keep little ones entertained this Easter.

Thursday 4 April, 2pm, 4pm (relaxed performance) and 6pm

Tortoise & the Hare Presented by Northern Ballet

When cheeky Hare won't stop boasting about how fast he can run, thoughtful Tortoise decides it is time to join him in a race. No one thinks Tortoise can win, but when Hare gets distracted by games and treats, Tortoise might just surprise us all.

The perfect introduction to live ballet and music.

Recommended age: 2+
£10 (£8 concession)

Saturday 6 April, 11am and 2pm

Nick Cope's Family Show

Star of CBeebies show Nick Cope's Popcast, Nick has been writing and recording his beautiful and totally unique songs for children and their families for more than 10 years.

Nick sings his uniquely crafted songs while playing guitar and is accompanied by a backdrop of beautifully animated projections to ignite children's imagination.

Recommended age: 3+
£14 (£52 family ticket min. two under 16s)



Friday 12 April, 1.30pm and 5pm

Ministry of Science Live: Science Saved the World

The UK's favourite science team is back and more explosive than ever.

Expect 20ft liquid nitrogen clouds, exploding oxygen and hydrogen balloons, fire tornadoes, hydrogen bottle rockets, ignited methane and even a self-built hovercraft.

Recommended age: 6+
£16 (£60 family ticket min. one under 16s)

Bishop Auckland Town Hall



Friday 12 April, 7.30pm

The Importance of Being Earnest

Mistaken identity and romance collide with cucumber sandwiches and a handbag in this fast paced and hilarious adaptation of Oscar Wilde's much-loved comedy of manners. Jack loves Gwendolen. Algernon loves Cecily; though both of them are engaged to the roguish Ernest – much to the disapproval of the formidable Lady Bracknell. Unfortunately, Ernest doesn't actually exist, and when his true identity is revealed, being earnest takes on a whole new importance.

£16 (£14 concession)

03000 269 524 www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk



Gala Durham

English Touring Opera

Costumed, semi-staged performances.

Monday
25 March,
7.30pm

Manon Lescaut

Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* is a devastating depiction of a



woman wrestling with her desire for love on her own terms, and the rigid double standards imposed on her by society. Packed with memorable music and heartbreaking drama.

Tuesday
26 March,
7.30pm

The Rake's Progress

Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* charts young



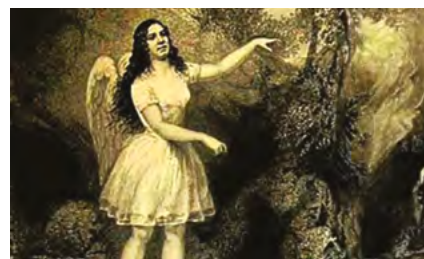
Tom Rakewell's journey from an unexpected riches to ruin at the hands of his own naivety and a devilish new friend.

£28 (£26 concession), £25 Gala Members, £46 double ticket offer available when booking both performances.

Tuesday 16 April, 7.30pm

Limelight

Returning from London to tread the boards in her hometown, Julia is greeted by fellow actresses Emily and Fanny. Backstage in their dressing room we discover their dreams, aspirations and secrets and reflect on the nature of fame.



Set against the backdrop of a dramatic night in the town, *Limelight* is based on the career of Julia St George, a real-life star of the Victorian stage.

Recommended age: 12+ £16 (£14 concession).

Tuesday 23 to
Saturday 27 April,
7.30pm (+2pm
Wednesday and
Saturday)

Half A Sixpence

Presented by Durham Musical Theatre Company

A light-hearted romp with a feel-good ending, that is guaranteed to give you a good night of theatre and send you home smiling.

Half a Sixpence tells the story of Arthur Kipps, an orphan who unexpectedly inherits a fortune and climbs the social ladder before losing everything and realizes that you just can't buy happiness.

The toe-tapping score includes *Half a Sixpence*, *Long Ago* and the ever-popular *Flash, Bang, Wallop*.

£19.50 (£18 all tickets on Tuesday 7pm; senior citizens on Wednesday 2pm; and students, under 16s, disability access and unwaged on Saturday 2pm).



03000 266 600 www.galadurham.co.uk



ONGOING EVENTS

Sunderland and Co Durham Royal Society for the Blind drop-in social groups

Second Tuesday of the month,
10am-12noon

North Road Methodist Church,
Durham, DH1 4SG

Fourth Tuesday of the month (exc.
August and December), 1pm-3pm

Masonic Hall, Scott Street, Stanley,
DH9 8AD

Offering help, support and advice for
people with sight loss. Free.
0191 567 3939

Various dates and locations

Age UK Future You Forums

A chance for people aged 50 to 65 to
share their views and help shape Age UK
services for the future. Free.

0191 386 3856 or email
info@ageukcountydurham.org.uk

Wednesdays from September to
May, 1.30pm-3.30pm

Durham Recorded Music Society

Belmont Parish Hall, Broomside Lane,
Durham, DH1 2QR

Relax listening to classical music with
like-minded people. You don't have to
know anything about classical music or
play an instrument. All you need to do is
to like the music, sit back and enjoy it.

Free. 0191 388 3055

Wednesdays, 10.30am-12.30pm

Creative Forum

The Mining Art Gallery, Bishop
Auckland, DL14 7NP

Meet like-minded people to explore your
artistic potential, in a supportive and
inspiring environment. Bring your own
equipment and creative project. Free.
www.aucklandproject.org

Wednesdays, 2pm-3.15pm

Seated Yoga with the MS Society North Durham

All Saints Church, Carr House Drive,
Durham, DH1 5LT

Gentle yoga for anyone – mainly seated
Donation £2.50. 07976 274 794
ttyoga@btinternet.com



Thursdays 10am-2pm

Stay and Play

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle,
DL12 8NP

Time for you and your babies and
toddlers to explore play in the galleries,
investigate materials and be creative in
this self-led, free-play session. Suitable
for pre-school children. Included in
admission cost. 01833 690606
www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk

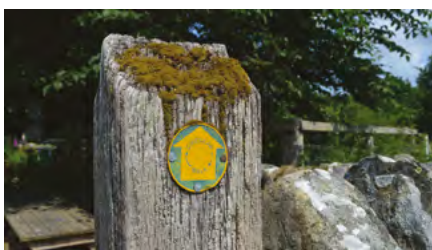


Fridays from 5 April, 1.30pm-3.30pm

All Sorts

The Mining Art Gallery, Bishop
Auckland, DL14 7NP

A dementia-friendly social group for
older people where you can laugh, share
stories and try new things. Free.
www.aucklandproject.org



Last Saturday of each month,
10.30am

Saturday Strolls

North Pennines National Landscape -
various locations (check the website)

A guided walk through a historic
landscape at a relaxed pace. Free.
01388 528801
www.northpennines.org.uk

MARCH

Until Monday 6 May

A Collector's Story: A Private Collection of Vivienne Westwood

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle,
DL12 8NP

Discover a snapshot of the late Vivienne
Westwood's career through the eyes of
collector, Peter Smithson. Peter has
collected Westwood clothing and
accessories for more than 25 years.

Entry fee applies. 01833 690606
www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk



Saturday 16 March, 2.30pm

Partytime!

Brancepeth Village Hall, Brancepeth,
DH7 8DG

A concert of songs from opera, operetta
and musical theatre presented by
Opera Nova. £10 adults. £1 under 16s
and students. 07936 080535

Sunday 17 March, 11am, 12.30pm
and 2pm

The Sound of Spain

The Spanish Gallery, Bishop
Auckland, DL14 7NJ

Experience the Spanish Gallery come
alive with live music. Free with an
annual pass or Spanish Gallery ticket.
www.aucklandproject.org



Thursday 21 March, 10.30am-11.30am

Little Locos

Locomotion, Shildon, DL4 2RE

A special session for visitors aged five
and under, and their families and carers.
Little Locos is the perfect place for you
and your little ones to play and learn
together. Free but booking required.
03300 580 058 www.locomotion.org.uk



Saturday 23 March, 12noon-5pm

Holi Festival

Durham University Oriental Museum, Durham, DH1 3TH

Celebrate Holi, the Indian Spring Festival also known as the Festival of Colours, with powder throws, tasty Asian cuisine, storytelling, music, art activities and more. **Charges apply, booking essential.** 0191 334 5691 www.durham.ac.uk/things-to-do

Saturday 23 March, 7.30pm

Weardale Community Choir Spring Concert

Frosterley Village Hall, Weardale, DL13 2QW

An evening of song performed by Weardale Community Choir. Refreshments included. Raffle available. **Free concert with voluntary donations.** 07811 221151 weardalecommunitychoir@gmail.com



Saturday 23 March, 7.30pm

Simply Dylan

The Witham, Barnard Castle, DL12 8LY

As straightforward as the title suggests: no frills, no gimmicks and no pretence. Led by front man John O'Connell, the 4-piece band delivers a tribute to Bob Dylan celebrating the rich and diverse work of the award-winning artist. **£18.** 01833 631107 www.thewitham.org.uk

Sunday 24 March, 11am

Luxury Macramé Plant Pot and Hanger Workshop with Cream Tea

Lanchester Garden Centre, Lanchester, DH7 0SS

Join Adeline and Twine for a unique crafting experience where you will make your very own plant pot and Macramé plant hanger to match. **£55.** www.lanchestergardencentre.co.uk



Friday 29 March to Monday 1 April

Easter celebrations

Beamish Museum, Beamish, DH9 0RG

An egg-cellent Easter weekend with crafts and games, and a special Easter trail, it's sure to be a cracking day out. Included in **normal museum admission** or free to Unlimited Pass holders and Friends of Beamish members. 0191 370 4000 www.beamish.org.uk

Sunday 31 March and Sunday 1 April, 10am-4pm

Easter Chick Hunt

Botanic Garden, Durham City, DH1 3TN

Easter Chicks are hiding in the garden. Pick up your spotter sheet and see how many you can find in this fun family event. **Adults £5, Children free.** 0191 3342887 www.durham.ac.uk/things-to-do

APRIL

Tuesday 2 April, 10am

SeaScapes: Coastal Bird Walk

Start: Nose's Point Car Park, Seaham, SR7 7TT

A circular bird walk exploring Nose's Point and the surrounding area. **Free.** 0191 584 3112

Thursday 4 to Saturday 6 April, 7pm

The River Line

Whorlton Village Hall, Whorlton, DL12 8XG

A play set in occupied France, centred on a group of fugitive service men, who are escaping with the help of a French woman who is part of an organisation called The River Line. **£TBC.** 01833 627419 www.castleplayers.co.uk



Tuesday 9 to Saturday 13 April, 11am-3pm

East Durham Veterans Art Group Exhibition

EDAN Gallery, Seaham, SR7 7HF

East Durham Artists' Network are delighted to be hosting the first exhibition of art from the recently formed East Durham Veterans Art group. **Free.** 0191 6499431 edanart@live.com



Saturday 13 April, various times

Copper Rose Making Workshop

South Causey Inn, Stanley, DH9 0LS

Learn how to craft your very own Copper Rose. Cut out copper blanks and cold forge them into a beautiful design to take home to show off to friends and family. **£48.** 01207 235 555 www.southcausey.co.uk

Tuesday 16 April, 7.30pm

Ferryhill, Sedgefield and District Flower Club

Parish Hall, Sedgefield, TS21 3AT

Flower demonstration open evening by Vanessa Wellock, titled 'Bringing Colour to Grey'. **£8.** 07533 752870

Saturday 20 April, 9.30am-4.30pm
The Northern Dales
Richard III Group Study Day
- Open to all

St Mary's Parish Church, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NQ
 Speakers: **Philippa Langley**: *The Princes in the Tower: Solving History's Greatest Cold Case*. **David Santiuste**: *A Very Great Lord: The Life and Reputation of Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset*. **Ian & Carol Schubert** of 'Rosa Mundi' re-enactment - *"How a man shall be armyd at his ese when he schal fighte on foote"*. **Dr Bridget Foreman**: *Looking for Richard*. **£25 (£20 full-time education), with additional £10 buffet lunch**. Ticket deadline for those wanting buffet lunch - Sat 13 April. For full details, call 01833 637 018 or kirklandergirl@googlemail.com

Wednesday 24 April, 1.30pm
Lanchester Flower Club

Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0PB
 Meeting with a talk by Howard Leslie of Quiet Garden Plants. **£TBC 01207 521 275**

Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 April, 7.30pm weekdays, 2.30pm weekends
Snake in the Grass - Thriller
by Alan Ayckbourn

The City Theatre, Durham City, DH1 3RA
 A suspense about murder, blackmail and haunting. **£8.50**.
www.durhamcitytheatre.co.uk



Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 April, 10am-3pm
Raby Castle Spring Market

Raby Castle, Staindrop, DL2 3AH
 Browse stalls and discover lots of delicious treats, seasonal produce and beautiful homemade products and delicious food stalls from local suppliers. Raby Castle's Stable Shop will be open as always - the perfect place to shop. **Free entry**. 01833 660202 www.raby.co.uk

Sunday 28 April, 10.30am-1.30pm
Roarsome Roadshow
 Spectrum Leisure Centre, Willington, DL15 0JA

An amazing chance to 'get up close' meet and interact with dinosaurs. **£4**. 01388 745 588 www.empirecrook.co.uk

MAY

Thursday 2 May, 7pm
Cestrian Flower Club



Methodist Church, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3TF
 Flower arranging demonstration by Pam Alexander. **£7**. 07751 752187

Friday 3 May, 7pm arrival for a 7.30pm start

Spennymoor Mayor's Charity Race Night

Neil Adams Sports Bar, Spennymoor Town Football Club, DL16 7DA
 In support of the Neo-Natal baby units at Durham and Darlington Hospitals, the Learning Library of Spennymoor, which provides support to families of children with autism, and Moors in the Community, which provides activities such as disability football, community meals and warm hub, over 50s walking football and breakfast buddies. **£10 per person to include pie and peas**. Contact Louise Holmes on 01388815276



Friday 3 May, 7.30pm
The Spectacular Music of Harry Potter

Durham Cathedral, Durham City, DH1 3EH
 A spellbinding concert featuring the spectacular music from the magnificent Harry Potter films - performed by the sensational International Film Orchestra. **From £16**. 0191 338 7178 www.durhamcathedral.co.uk

Please note: venue opening is subject to change, please check before you visit.

Sunday 5 May, 11.45am-10.30pm
Crookfest '24

Crook Football Club, Crook, DL15 9PW
 Tribute festival with Bon Jovi Forever, Arctic Monkeys tribute Mardy Bums, AC/DC-UK, C-Collective, Born Villians, Revolver, Micky Glamz, Jay R Mad for Ska, ABBA Gold, Eli and more. There are three large marquees, also bars and food outlets. **From £20**. www.crookfest.co.uk



Monday 6 May, 11am-4pm
NMTF Young Traders' Market

Durham Market Place, Durham, DH1 3NJ
 The Durham heat of the NMTF Young Traders' Market is a great opportunity to discover young retailers, and potentially the big retail stars of tomorrow. 0191 384 6153 www.durhammarkets.co.uk

Wednesday 15 to Saturday 18 May
Wed to Fri 7.15pm, Sat 2.30pm
Riverside Musical Theatre Company presents
Curtains

Park View Community Theatre, Chester-le-Street
 A musical comedy whodunnit from the creators of Cabaret and Chicago. **From £10**. 07846992611 www.ticketsource.co.uk/ riversidemusicaltheatrecompany

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Find more events and activities at www.thisisdurham.com/whats-on



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