

DURHAM

Summer 2024

County News

www.durham.gov.uk



The Story begins

New cultural venue opens

Brass is back

Join the party this summer

Transforming towns

Spotlight on Spennymoor



Welcome

to the summer edition of Durham County News

Our residents are always at the heart of this magazine, but never more so than in this edition.

On pages 15 to 18, you can find a special pull-out feature to mark the opening of The Story on Friday 14 June. The new cultural venue and register office will celebrate the lives of everyday people in County Durham over the centuries, providing new ways to engage with our historic collections. It will also record the important life events of the people who live here now and in the future.

On pages 22 and 23, you can read about the difference Supported Lodgings providers are making to the lives of care leavers across County Durham. And on page 25, meet 84-year-old powerlifter Gavin Walker who is inspiring people to go to the gym.

Festival season is of course in full swing and on pages 12 and 13 you can find details about Durham Brass Festival's return in July.

And finally, this will be the last printed edition of Durham County News delivered to households this year, but don't worry, we will still be producing and sharing the same informative content. Find out about the new arrangements on page 8.



Councillor Amanda Hopgood,
Leader of the Council

Amanda Hopgood

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Front cover image: Staff pictured outside of The Story ahead of its opening on Friday 14 June.

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



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Oh, I do like to eat beside the seaside



Save the date: Seaham Food Festival returns to the Durham Heritage Coast on **Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 August.**

Get set for a fun-filled weekend of fabulous food and drink, live entertainment and inspirational cookery demonstrations by celebrity chefs.

As always, this free event will feature the very best traders and producers from across County Durham and beyond. Think exciting street food, indulgent desserts, craft beers and spirits, the finest local produce and much, much more.

To stay up to date with the latest festival news, visit www.seahamfoodfestival.co.uk, search for **Seaham Food Festival** on Facebook and follow **@seahamfoodfest** on X and Instagram.



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 [/DurhamCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/DurhamCouncil)

News



The Road to Net Zero

Our Highways team is paving the way for other local authorities in the use of a new road resurfacing product to help tackle climate change.

Working with our surfacing and planning partner MGL Group, and County Durham based climate tech company Low Carbon Materials (LCM), we have delivered the first resurfacing scheme using a carbon negative aggregate designed to lower the carbon footprint of asphalt.

The product is made from a material that has already absorbed carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to form an aggregate. It is used within the binder course, before the final surface layer is put down, and, once it is laid, continues to capture carbon dioxide and lock it within the aggregate permanently.

The resurfacing works took place at Elvet Hill in Durham where around 15 tonnes of the product has been laid, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the resurfacing works.

New specialist markets will help boost town centres

New markets ranging
from street food to
Christmas fayres are
coming to locations
across County Durham.



We have teamed up with specialist social enterprise Bacchanalia to organise bespoke markets in Chester-le-Street, Spennymoor, Consett, Stanley, Crook, Peterlee, Newton Aycliffe, Seaham, Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle and Durham City.

From craft markets and street food stalls to farmers' markets, vintage fayres and Christmas markets, the events will run throughout the year and build on previous events which have been held in Bishop Auckland.

The contract, which is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and runs until March 2025, will help to boost local economies, offering a platform to champion produce from the area.

Durham City Run new routes



Durham City Run Festival is back this summer with some exciting changes, including revised race routes.

Held in and around one of the world's most historic cities, the popular festival includes a host of exciting activities and events aimed at all ages and abilities.

Taking place from **Friday 18 to Sunday 20 July**, Durham City Run Festival will once again feature the popular Durham City Run 5K and 10K races, plus Paula Radcliffe's Families on Track, the Run Like A Legend Mile challenge, and XO urban orienteering.

New routes have also been introduced for the 5K and 10K runs. This year, both races will start outside of Radisson Blu and finish at Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site. There will also be lots more happening during the lead up to the festival weekend.

Entries are open now for all events.
www.durhamcityrunfestival.com



Protecting Killhope's future

Killhope Lead Mining Museum is set for further restoration works that will protect the future of the popular attraction for years to come.

The council has secured £500,000 from the government's Cultural Investment Fund to carry out the works, which include urgent repairs to the underground mine, washing floor, mine shop, buddle house, and jigger house.

It follows recently completed works – also supported by government funding – to safeguard the site's Armstrong wheel,

mine cart ramp, launder, and water race bridges.

The museum is temporarily closed for the 2024 season to allow the works to take place, with museum staff delivering a 'Killhope in the Community' programme across the county during the closure.

The £500,000 grant is from the Museum Estate and Development Fund, part of the Government's Cultural Investment Fund, which is administered by Arts Council England.

The fully restored museum is expected to reopen for the 2025 season.

Supporting the Armed Forces

We have once again been awarded the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Gold Award as part of our Employer Recognition Scheme.

The award recognises employers that demonstrate positive attitudes and policies towards serving and ex-members of the Armed Forces.

For all Armed Forces personnel, reservists, veterans and their families, our Armed Forces Outreach Service (AFOS) can provide help and support with benefits, employment, health and wellbeing, schools, and care and support. www.durham.gov.uk/armedforces



Captain Steve Simpson, 8th Battalion The Rifles (right), presents the award to council staff.

Get set to switch

Did you know analogue phone lines are being phased out and that your landline will be upgraded?

Telecoms companies have already begun replacing analogue networks, which are at the end of their servicable life, with new digital lines offering improved quality phone calls and new features.

Most customers are expected to be upgraded by the end of 2025.

For most people, this change will be straightforward. Your provider will

contact you when your landline is due to be upgraded and advise what to do. You do not need to do anything until then.

Find out what you, your family and neighbours need to do to be ready at www.durham.gov.uk/analogueswitch

Telephone providers can offer additional support to anyone who is vulnerable or depends on a landline. Contact your provider if you or a relative require such support.

If you are a telecare customer, you should contact your provider ahead of any change to your phone service



as it may affect your equipment. Our Care Connect customers can find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/analogueswitch-careconnect or by calling **03000 262 195**.

Any questions about how these changes might affect you should be directed to your service provider.



Have your say on revised Air Quality Action Plan

We've been busy reviewing the Air Quality Action Plan for Durham City and are now seeking people's views on the revised draft.

The draft identifies 21 suggested measures to reduce levels of nitrogen dioxide, a pollutant associated with exhaust emissions from vehicles.

The consultation takes the form of an online survey seeking people's views on the draft measures. There's also an opportunity to suggest alternative actions.

Completed surveys will be analysed and all feedback considered before the plan is finalised and adopted by the council later in the year.

For full details, and to complete the survey, visit www.durham.gov.uk/consultation

The consultation runs until Sunday 30 June 2024.

Views sought on customer services proposals

We're seeking your views on proposals to provide face-to-face customer services at more locations across the county.

Last year, we changed the opening hours at some of our Customer Access Points to ensure our opening hours reflect local demand.

However, ongoing evaluation of data and local intelligence has highlighted that demand for this service continues to reduce.

Some people have also told us their nearest Customer Access Point is further away than they would like.

The proposed changes would help us ensure we maintain the right level of support when and where it is needed.

The changes would also reduce the overall cost of offering face-to-face customer services support at a time when our budgets are under huge pressure.

For further details, and to have your say, visit www.durham.gov.uk/consultation or call in to one of our Customer Access Points or libraries.

The consultation runs until Sunday 28 July 2024.

A stable home for a fresh start

A council scheme is helping former offenders find homes and turn their lives around.

Our accommodation for ex-offenders scheme supports people leaving prison by helping them find private rented tenancies. Clients have a range of needs and often require secure accommodation before they can access the help and support they need to make a fresh start.

The scheme, which also helps to reduce homelessness, works by offering financial incentives to landlords, support with the moving in process and the supply of furniture. Support officers also work with clients for up to six months, carrying out home visits.

Since being set up in 2022, the scheme has helped 137 former offenders find homes. In its first phase (2022/23), 75 per cent of the clients housed have stayed in their property for 12 months or more. In phase two (2023/24), 20 have graduated to successful tenancies and managed six months or more.

Any landlords interested in getting involved in the scheme should email housingsolutions@durham.gov.uk

Opening up opportunities with free travel

Workers, jobseekers and young people leaving care are being offered free bus travel to help them access opportunities and maintain employment.



Our new alternative bus service, Link2work, provides links to workplaces that are not accessible to all residents via existing services. This includes Team Valley, Newton Aycliffe Business Park and Consett Hownsgill (Greencore) Industrial Park.

Journeys are booked in advance and can be tailored around shift patterns. Funded by the Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), travel will initially be free, followed by a flat fare of £2 per journey.

Visit www.durham.gov.uk/AlternativeBusServices or contact 03000 269 999 to find out more.

In addition to this, the North East Joint Transport Committee has secured funding from BSIP to provide free bus passes to young people aged 18 to 25 who have recently left local authority care.

This will allow care leavers to travel on buses across County Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear for free using a Network One season ticket.



Homelessness support boost

More than £6 million is being committed to tackling homelessness in County Durham after we were successful in a bid for funding.

The cash from the Government's Single Homeless Accommodation Programme will allow us to create new accommodation and increase the support available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The support will be specifically aimed at young people and adults aged between 18 and 25 years old.

Funding for food bank



A scheme which provides advice and assistance to people in need has received more than £80,000 in funding to expand its food bank programme.

The Crisis Intervention Programme has been awarded £46,400 from our Towns and Villages' Improving Community Resilience Fund as well as a further £40,000 from Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership.

The funding has been used to build an extension at Woodhouse Community Centre in Bishop Auckland, where the programme is based, to create a dedicated space for its food bank initiative.

£2.94 million secured for A690 road safety works

The A690 is set to receive almost £3 million worth of safety improvements following a successful funding bid.

We have been awarded £2.94 million from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Safer Roads Fund for a series of improvements between Crook and Neville's Cross in Durham City.

This stretch of the A690 is an important commuter link connecting Durham City with Crook, Willington and surrounding towns and villages. It's also a popular route for those travelling on to the Durham Dales.

Aimed at improving safety for all road users, but with a focus on pedestrians and cyclists, the works will include:

- ✓ A new shared path for cyclists and pedestrians between Holy Well Lane in Crook and Red House Gardens in Willington.
- ✓ Improved road markings between Willington and Brancepeth to make drivers more aware when they are nearing the kerbside at night and in poor weather.
- ✓ New traffic lights and a pedestrian crossing at the junction of the A690 and St John's Road in Meadowfield.
- ✓ Improvements for pedestrians on Langley Moor High Street.
- ✓ Road surface improvements at various locations along the route.



A new shared path for cyclists will run from Holly Well Lane in Crook, through Helmington Row and on to Red House Gardens in Willington.



New chapter for Durham County News

We're changing the way we share Durham County News with readers.

The summer 2024 edition you are reading now will be the last printed version of the magazine produced and delivered to households this year.

The remaining issues will be available to read as digital magazines online, with a limited number of printed copies delivered to council-run libraries, leisure centres and other venues across the county for people who cannot access the internet.

We will also continue to provide the magazine in alternative formats for blind and visually impaired people.

These arrangements will continue in 2025, with just the summer edition delivered to households as a printed magazine.

The changes to Durham County News come in the wake of mounting pressures on the council's budget, resulting in the need to save £16.3 million over the next four years. They were consulted on as part of our Medium Term Financial Plan, which was approved by full council in February.

We appreciate that many people look forward to receiving their printed copies of Durham County News and hope you will continue to enjoy our news and features online or at one of our venues.

We would also like to hear your thoughts and suggestions on the new arrangements and would encourage readers to take part in the survey on the right.

To receive an email alert when the latest digital issue of Durham County News is released, subscribe online at www.durham.gov.uk/DCNsubscribe

Q1 What do you think about the decision to limit household delivery of Durham County News to one edition per year and for other editions to be made available online and at council venues?

- Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Why do you feel like this?

Q2 If you disagree or strongly disagree, what else could we do, other than making the magazine available online and at council venues?

Q3 Which of the following do you find useful or interesting in Durham County News? Please tick all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case studies about people who have used our services | <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer news |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial support | <input type="checkbox"/> General news about council services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In depth features about the council's work | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about adult services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information about children's services | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about health and wellbeing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information about leisure services | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about our upcoming festivals and events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information about roads and transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about the environment, waste and recycling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our community What's On guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – <i>If other, please specify:</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stories about your local community | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 400px;"></div> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Updates on our regeneration schemes and projects | |

These questions are entirely optional.

Q4 Are you:

- Male Female Prefer to self-describe – *If prefer to self-describe, please specify:*

Q5 What is your age?

- Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75+

Q6 Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

(This may include any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity which has a substantial effect on your day-to-day life. Long standing means it has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least a year).

- Yes No

Q7 What is your ethnicity?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White British | <input type="checkbox"/> White Non-British | <input type="checkbox"/> Travelling Community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab or Middle Eastern | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – <i>If other, please specify:</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Race | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 300px;"></div> |

Please send your completed survey to Durham County News, Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UQ or return it to your nearest council library or Customer Access Point by **Monday 17 June**. The survey can also be completed online at www.durham.gov.uk/consultation

Spotlight on Spennymoor: a town on the up

With more than £7.5 million of public and private investment since 2020 and a further £20 million secured for the next ten years, Spennymoor is a town that is going places, and the community is very much in the driving seat.



Take a walk through Spennymoor town centre and you do not need to look far to find evidence of the investment the town has benefited from in recent years.

Part of **Festival Walk**, a run-down, largely vacant shopping centre in the heart of the town, was demolished by the council and the Hellens Group in 2021, presenting an exciting opportunity to breathe fresh life into a prime retail area. In a large part of the site, previously occupied by Kwik Save, we created a free car park. This £600,000 investment was boosted by the private sector, with the supermarket chain Aldi building a brand new store on the site. This opened in May 2022 and Aldi's old premises was later re-let to Farm Foods. The remaining Festival Walk units, meanwhile, have been revamped to provide enhanced space for retail businesses.

And we did not stop there.

As part of the council's commitment to revitalising towns and villages across the county, last year, we embarked on a series of public realm



improvements in the Market Place and former Festival Walk area. Funded by our **Towns and Villages and town centre capital programmes**, the works included the installation of new paving, bollards and seating to enhance the visitor and resident experience.

We also introduced bespoke lighting to help create a vibrant atmosphere and to allow images to be projected on to paving and buildings on special occasions.

Our regeneration efforts continued with the recent

demolition of five derelict units in Cheapside to make way for a walled community garden.

And over at **Spennymoor Leisure Centre**, a major refurbishment has seen the town's library service incorporated into the building, along with upgrades to the swimming pool and the creation of a new children's soft play area and café.

The third phase of the scheme will be the demolition of the former library and the garage buildings located behind it.



Creating a shared vision for a brighter future

The pace of change in Spennymoor shows no sign of slowing down in the years ahead, thanks to the town's inclusion in the Government's **£1.1 billion Long Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) Programme**.

Spennymoor was one of 55 towns across England selected by the Government for the programme and has been allocated £20 million to invest in regeneration projects over the next 10 years.

This spring, we convened a new Spennymoor LTPT Board to oversee the development of a £20 million investment plan for the town.

Alan Boddy, chief executive of Livin Housing and Chair of the Advance Learning Partnership Multi-Academy



Trust, has been appointed as Chair of the board. Alan, who has spent the majority of his working life in Spennymoor, is joined on the board by community ambassadors, businesspeople, councillors and representatives from other local organisations.

In line with County Durham's Inclusive Economic Strategy, we are keen for Spennymoor residents and businesses to be at the heart of the LTPT vision. **A public consultation is running until Friday 31 May** and the

feedback gathered will help create a vision for the town as well as priorities for investment and regeneration across the next 10 years.

Key themes include:

-  **High streets, heritage, and regeneration**
-  **Transport and connectivity**
-  **Safety and security**

To have your say, visit www.durham.gov.uk/consultation

A face-to-face consultation event will also be held during a family fun day in Spennymoor Market Place on Saturday 25 May.

Support for businesses

Our community economic development team has been working hard to support businesses across the county, including Spennymoor, where many have taken advantage of our retail support packages.

This includes **Targeted Business Improvement grants**, which can cover up to 70 per cent of a maximum of £20,000-worth of improvements to the external appearance of a business premises. The Studio, a local photography business, is among the recent recipients and the team is currently working with 10 other businesses in the town.

As well as offering financial support for building improvements, the team can assist with free retail-based training courses. Start-up grants are also available for new retail, hospitality and leisure businesses which have been trading for less than six months.

For more information about town centre redevelopment plans or support for businesses, contact ced@durham.gov.uk or visit www.durham.gov.uk/retail



Summer's biggest party is back

Live music returns to the streets of County Durham this summer. Durham Brass Festival is back with a line-up that promises to entertain and delight this July...

The streets of County Durham will once again be ringing out to the sounds of brass as one of the region's most popular music festivals returns.

Durham Brass Festival is back for 2024, with a week of spectacular performances, new commissions, free concerts, community activities and a full programme of exciting street bands.

The festival takes place from Friday 5 to Saturday 13 July, kicking off with critically acclaimed group **Public Service Broadcasting** performing their album *Every Valley* at a sold-out concert in Durham Cathedral.

Every Valley tells the story of the rise and fall of the coal industry. It was Public Service Broadcasting's first Top 5 album in the UK and saw them joined by James Dean Bradfield, frontman of indie rock legends Manic Street Preachers.

Other highlights this year include Welsh brass band competition veterans **The Cory Band** who will perform their own musical retelling of the legendary film *King Kong*, at Gala Durham, on Sunday 7 July. Ranked the world's number one brass band from 2007 to 2023 and multiple winners of championships at world, European and British level, the band promises to deliver a show to remember.



This year's festival will also feature the return of the popular free outdoor events, **Streets of Brass in Durham City (Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 July)** and **Party in the Park at Wharton Park (Saturday 6 July)**. Featuring talented street bands from around the world, these lively events are fun for all the family, with dancing very much encouraged.



J Willgoose Esq, founding member of Public Service Broadcasting, is looking forward to performing in a location with such a strong connection to *Every Valley*, 40 years on from the miners' strikes.

"We are hoping that playing with a brass band in somewhere as amazing as Durham Cathedral will be really powerful," he said. "It'll give it a power we've never had before, and we can put it in front of an audience that it means something to."



Durham
Brass
 5-13 July 2024



The musician, whose last album, *Bright Magic*, debuted at number two in the UK album chart, added: "I've spent a lot of time in the North East, because my dad is from Fulwell in Sunderland. He moved to London in 1975, but my grandfather lived in Seaburn, so we used to go up all the time and we'd go to Beamish a lot.

"I do wonder how much of an influence that had on me wanting to do a record on coal mining. You never know what things are imprinting on your mind, but it always feels very close to home even though it's a long way from South London. I certainly knew all about the Miners' Gala and the colliery bands and it always feels important to me to play in the North East."

Public Service Broadcasting will be joined by another band with a strong mining heritage. The **NASUWT Riverside Band**, from the former mining village Pelton Fell, have appeared at previous Durham Brass festivals,



collaborating with Richard Hawley in 2022; and as part of the internationally renowned *Miners' Hymn* performances of 2010 and 2014.

Tony Thompson, leader of the NASUWT Riverside Band, said: "I can't wait to work with Public Service Broadcasting. I think it's so pertinent because it's 40 years since the miners' strike, so it's the ideal time to reflect on that. There's so much about coal mining in the history of Durham, and the Cathedral is absolutely unique. It's very big acoustically, but you can still hear the detail so it lends itself to music that can be quiet and reflective. I think it will be a memorable night."



#DurhamBRASS



this is durham



To stay up to date, visit www.brassfestival.co.uk and follow Brass International Festival on Facebook and @durhambrass on Instagram and X.

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Durham
County Council



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





The Story | We're all part of it

A new cultural venue celebrating the past, present and future of County Durham will open its doors to the public on Friday 14 June.

Located in the recently restored Grade II listed Mount Oswald on the outskirts of Durham City, The Story will cement the county's reputation as the Culture County. Not only will it showcase the area's fascinating heritage but, as the new home of the County Registration Service, it will be a place where current and future generations make their own milestones.

The Story will bring together five historic collections of ancient archives and archaeological finds, with a programme of exhibitions and activities encouraging people of all ages to interact with the stories within.

And it will provide a permanent home for the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection, reuniting it with the DLI Archive for the first time since 1998.

From the letters and diaries of our ancestors to the fairytale weddings of the future, The Story is a place to uncover history and create your own.

Collections that inform and inspire

The Story is the new home of some of the county's most important heritage collections.

Over the last year, our collections team has packed and moved more than 15,000 objects and over six miles of archives to the Mount Oswald site.

For the very first time, the collections of Durham County Record Office, the DLI, Local Studies, the Historic Environment Record and the county's registration service are housed under the same roof. And with state-of-the-art purpose-built storage facilities, these collections will be preserved for generations to come.

Available for everyone to explore, these precious collections chart people's lives from birth to death.

They allow us to see snippets of a person's life from the moment their birth is registered, to where they went to school and the communities in which they lived, as well as providing a unique insight into their health, relationships, working life and much more.

These collections will be easier to access than ever before with enhanced search facilities supported by cutting edge digital tools. There will also be free exhibitions, talks and events exploring County Durham's history.

And, thanks to funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, made possible by National Lottery players, there will be an exciting activity programme with storytelling sessions, kids' takeover days, behind the scenes tours, volunteering opportunities and community projects.



Together again with a little help from some friends

The opening of The Story marks the start of an exciting new chapter for the DLI Collection and DLI Archive.

For the first time since 1998, these important records and objects are now housed in the same place.

When Captain David Ridley, Regimental Operational Support Officer at 8th Battalion The Rifles, heard about the plans, he was keen to support the endeavour and arranged for the unit to help with the big move.

"It was a great privilege for our soldiers to be involved in the movement of the DLI Collection weapons to their new home within The Story," said Captain Ridley.

"Our heritage is extremely important to us, and we continue to hold dear the traditions of our forebears.

"Still to this day, our soldiers wear the Inkerman Whistle and Chain on ceremonial dress in recognition of the 68th DLI's heroic actions during the Battle of Inkerman in 1854. We are really looking forward to coming along to the grand opening in June."

8th Battalion The Rifles is County Durham's local Infantry Reserve Unit. Anyone interested in joining is encouraged to email 8rifles-recruiting@mod.gov.uk



A pioneering approach

The Story's collections may celebrate the people and events of the past, but when it comes to technology the venue is firmly rooted in the 21st century.

A state-of-the-art online collections search will be available both onsite and online, meaning people can discover The Story's treasures from the comfort of their own homes, as well as taking advantage of AI features to make the process even easier.

County Archivist, Carolyn Ball, said: *"We are one of the very first collections services to utilise AI in our search database and the results so far are remarkable. I'm looking forward to what visitors uncover as they deep-dive through the collections."*

Within The Story itself, visitors can experiment with audio and visual devices to interact with exhibitions and collections in new ways. A specialist digitisation studio, meanwhile, will allow the team to expand the collections that are digitally available to the public.

A dedicated website – www.thestorydurham.org – will keep the public up to date with the latest events, exhibitions and visitor information.

And don't forget to join in the conversation by following @TheStoryDurham on Facebook and X.



Happily ever after

As the new home of the County Registration Service, The Story will record the most important events in the lives of County Durham residents.

For Superintendent Registrar Anne Robson and her team, it's the start of an exciting new era.

With its stunning grounds and elegant architecture, The Story is perhaps not what springs to mind when you think of a register office wedding. However, from Friday 14 June it will be just that.

Couples will be able to tie the knot in a Grade II listed manor house which has been tastefully and sympathetically restored inside and out. The ceremonial staircase is the perfect example – a wedding photographer's dream, it would not be out of place in the most exclusive of venues.

"I believe The Story will become the flagship register office venue in the North East," said Anne. "It's a listed building, the grounds are beautiful and the ceremonial staircase and the ceremony rooms are just perfect for special occasions such as weddings, civil partnerships, naming ceremonies and renewing of vows."

"What's more, we will have increased capacity and availability seven days per week. It really is the start of a new era, and we are looking forward to helping even more people mark the moments that matter most."

The Story will also provide a central point for the statutory registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. This will add to the historic records already housed at the venue, ensuring the stories of County Durham and its people continue to be celebrated and preserved for generations to come.

For more information about the County Registration Service and weddings at The Story, visit www.durham.gov.uk/registrars or www.thestorydurham.org



Join in the festivities

To celebrate the opening of The Story, we are planning an exciting programme of events from **Friday 14 to Sunday 16 June**. As well as the opportunity to be among the first to see a new permanent interactive exhibition exploring the history of County Durham, visitors will be able to try out the state-of-the-art new ways to engage with The Story's collections. Visitors can also browse the elegant ceremony rooms now available for marriages and civil ceremonies, with those who have already booked invited in for a special tour.

There will be plenty to keep children entertained too, including a teddy bear's picnic and the opportunity for youngsters to register their teddies. Refreshments will be available in the café at the venue.



We will be sharing more details on www.thestorydurham.org and our social media channels over the coming weeks.

Take on a starring role

Volunteers play a crucial role in supporting The Story as a place to discover the past, celebrate the present and create the future of County Durham.

They are key to unlocking and sharing the county's stories, and bring a wealth of skills, experience and ideas.

Thanks to National Lottery players, there is a wide variety of interesting and rewarding volunteering opportunities at The Story, both online and onsite and in the community. Whether it is making visitors feel welcome, assisting with the collections, or helping the next generation discover their past – there is something for everyone and no experience is needed.

To find out more, visit www.durham.gov.uk/volunteering





Garden waste collected by the council is converted into high quality compost.

Did you know?

In 2023, 67,400 households signed up to our garden waste scheme and we collected 16,600 tonnes of garden waste – a 15 per cent increase on 2022. This trend looks set to continue, with an additional 2,159 households registered by March 2024 compared to the previous year.



Join the composting revolution

Healthy soil is an essential ingredient for successful gardening and productive farming. It allows us to grow nutritious food and is the foundation of our wildlife habitats.

This is why it's so important that we nurture the soil, and that starts with reusing our garden waste.

We've joined forces with Enrich the Earth, a charity aiming to convert one million tonnes of green and food waste a year into valuable, nutrient rich, peat-free compost. As part of this, we're reminding all subscribers to our garden waste collection scheme to ensure their green waste is properly sorted, clean and plastic free. This will allow us to convert even more waste into high quality compost.

To become a fully-fledged composting hero, why not try composting at home? Discounted compost bins are available on our website at

www.durham.gov.uk/composting

For more information about what goes in which bin, visit www.durham.gov.uk/whatgoeswhere

To find out more about the council's garden waste collection scheme visit www.durham.gov.uk/gardenwaste

To find out more about Enrich the Earth and for top composting tips and inspiration, visit www.enrichtheearth.co.uk



Recycling reminder

Residents are reminded not to overfill their glass recycling boxes this summer.



It's far better to spread glass jars and bottles out across two boxes, rather than putting out one fuller, heavier box for our crews to lift.

Additional recycling boxes are available free of charge and can be requested online at doitonline.durham.gov.uk or by calling 03000 26 0000.

Bank holiday bin collections



Bin collections will not be affected by the May and August bank holidays. Residents are advised to leave their bins out as normal on their regular collection days.

Look after your litter

Summer is a fantastic time to explore all that County Durham has to offer – but please remember to take your litter home.

If there is no bin where you are, pop the litter in your pocket until you can find one or take it home to recycle.

Anyone caught dropping litter could be fined up to £150.

Find out more online at www.durham.gov.uk/litter

Help for families feeling the squeeze

We know family budgets are under pressure – that’s why we offer a wide range of help and support.

Here are just seven of the many ways in which you can seek help if you’re struggling to make ends meet.



2 Free school meals

Free school meals are available for children in primary and secondary schools if their parents or guardians receive certain benefits. All children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 automatically receive free school meals paid for by the government but, if you receive a qualifying benefit, we’d still encourage you to register for them as it means your school will receive extra funding.

Families who claim benefits-related free school meals can also get help with school uniform costs, travel to school and holiday clubs and activities. Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

1 Healthy Start card

If you’re more than 10 weeks into your pregnancy or have a child under four years old, you may be entitled to a Healthy Start card, which you can use to buy items such as milk, vegetables and infant formula.

Eligibility is dependent on whether you and your family receive certain benefits. You will qualify automatically if you are under 18 and pregnant. Recipients of a Healthy Start card can also get free vitamins.

For full details and to check your eligibility, visit www.durham.gov.uk/helpwithyourmoney

You can also ask your midwife or health visitor for advice.



4

Help with food costs

We know food costs are a real problem for lots of families. The Bread and Butter Thing offers a shopping bag filled with an average of £35 worth of quality, nutritious food for just £7.50. There’s also a network of food banks throughout the county.

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

3 Free sessions for babies and toddlers

Our network of Family Hubs runs all sorts of free sessions for families, including the ever-popular Baby and Me and Toddler and Me groups.

We have 15 Family Hubs across the county and you can go to any of them – it doesn’t have to be the one nearest to you.

Find out what’s on at www.durham.gov.uk/familyhubs



5 Funded childcare

If you're a working parent of a child aged nine months to four years old, you might be able to get even more help with your childcare costs.

In April, the government introduced extra support, meaning eligible families can get 15 hours of funded childcare for two-year-olds and up to 30 hours for three and four-year-olds.

Look out for even more help in September this year, when children as young as nine months old will be included in the 15 hours of funded childcare offer too.

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



6

Help with school uniform costs

The cost of school uniforms can be a struggle for families. Many schools allow parents and carers to buy cheaper, unbranded uniform items, or offer uniform swaps.

Please check with your school for details.

There are also organisations throughout the county that can provide new and preloved school uniforms. For a full list, along with full details of the support on offer, visit www.durham.gov.uk/schooluniform



7 Fun and Food programme

If your child gets benefits-related free school meals, then you will receive a ticket for our Fun and Food programme from your school.

The programme runs during the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays across the county, providing a host of free activities as well as a meal.

Details of how to find out what's on in your area and how to book your child a place will be on the ticket.

You can also email our team at funandfoodtickets@durham.gov.uk if you have any questions or need any help.



FUN &
FOOD



That's not all

Alongside our family-focused help, we offer support on all kinds of matters including:

- claiming benefits
- debt advice
- avoiding homelessness
- help with heating and energy bills
- access to credit unions

For full details visit:
www.durham.gov.uk/helpwithyourmoney

For details of the full range of support on offer to families, visit
www.durham.gov.uk/helpforfamilies



From spare room to steppingstone



When Cheryl Reardon's adult son and daughter left home, she felt like the house was empty. "I had suddenly been left in the house on my own, and I think the 'empty nest syndrome' was really hard for me," explained Cheryl, who lives in Langley Park. "Supported Lodgings was a way to bring people back into my life and use my skills to help more young people."

Since then, Cheryl has provided a home to a huge number of young care leavers, equipping them with the life skills they need to take the next steps into adulthood.

Cheryl is one of 17 Supported Lodgings providers across County Durham offering a safe and caring home environment to young people aged 16 to 25 who have left care or are at risk of being homeless.

But new providers are always needed to ensure even more young people receive this support at this important time in their lives.

Cheryl currently provides a home for two young people, a 16-year-old boy and Devon, a 19-year-old performing arts student.

Reflecting on the first time she arrived at Cheryl's house, Devon said: "With the circumstances I was coming from,

For the last seven years, Cheryl Reardon has provided a safe and supportive home to young care leavers, equipping them with the skills they need to lead independent lives. With more Supported Lodgings providers needed in County Durham, Cheryl explains how the experience has enriched her life.



I wasn't expecting such a homely environment, but the day after I arrived, I was talking to Cheryl like she was the best friend I'd never had.

"When you're in care you get the more 'motherly' aspect of being cared for, whereas in Supported Lodgings you also get the friend that puts things into perspective for you."

Cheryl agrees, adding: "It's a fine line between looking after them and helping them to stand on their own two feet and seeing them out the door.

"I think they really enjoy having a level of trust in a Supported Lodgings environment, and being able to do what they want, without being told what to do. They're free to make their own choices and learn about the consequences, I'm there to help guide them through that as well."

Cheryl doesn't have to do it all on her own though, the council provides support from a dedicated social worker who is on hand to offer help and advice.

“...the day after I arrived, I was talking to Cheryl like she was the best friend I'd never had.”

“ I feel proud of myself for doing it and I’m very proud of the young people who have developed from it as well. ”



She also regularly catches up with other Supported Lodgings providers.

“We get together to swap stories and have a laugh. We share experiences and ideas as to how we’ve got through different challenges, it’s a great support network.”

County Durham residents with a spare room who would like to support a vulnerable young person, are encouraged to apply to become a Supported Lodgings provider. Providers can be working, retired or unemployed; single or in relationship; and of any sexual orientation. They must be 21 or over but there is no upper age limit so long as they are fit and healthy.

Supported Lodgings providers must be able to provide the young person with their own key, bedroom and access to a bathroom, kitchen and laundry facilities.

A key part of the role is to encourage and help the young person to become independent, and this may involve providing practical support with tasks such as learning to



cook, working a washing machine, managing a budget, getting to appointments and job seeking. The young person may just need someone to listen to them and to offer friendship and support.

In return, providers are paid rent for the use of the room and the assistance they provide. They also receive professional training and development, as well as support from a dedicated social worker.

For Cheryl, it’s the positive difference she makes to the young people’s lives that is the major motivation.

“I feel proud of myself for doing it and I’m very proud of the young people who have developed from it as well,” she says.

“It’s heartbreaking saying goodbye to them at the door when they leave, but it’s also rewarding because you know you’ve helped them.”

To learn more about Supported Lodgings and to enquire about becoming a provider, visit www.durham.gov.uk/supportedlodgings



Support to reduce self-neglect

A team that supports vulnerable adults dealing with self-neglect and hoarding behaviours has helped more than 100 people in its first year.

Our **Breakthrough Service** aims to empower individuals to improve their wellbeing and create safer and healthier homes.

From helping individuals increase their confidence and manage anxiety, to decluttering activities, developing a daily routine and encouraging relationships and socialising – the team adopts a trauma informed care approach, taking time to get to know clients to ensure they feel safe and understood.

It also works closely with the NHS, GP practices, housing providers, environmental health, emergency services and bereavement charities.

County Durham residents aged 18 and over who are registered with a GP and have significant issues with self-neglect and hoarding behaviours can be referred to the Breakthrough Service by their social worker.

If you or someone you know could benefit from the service, but you are not in contact with social services, visit www.durham.gov.uk/socialcaredirect



Moving more for mental health

An active lifestyle is important for mental health and summer is the ideal time to get out and about.

Whether it is a gentle jog around your local park, a family bike ride or joining one of our many guided walks across the county, the County Durham countryside offers a wealth of outdoor activities.

From the Durham Dales to the Durham Heritage Coast, explore hundreds of walking and cycling trails to suit all fitness levels.

Movement is also the theme of this year's **Mental Health Awareness Week** (13-19 May), with a special campaign highlighting how exercise can improve wellbeing.

If walking or cycling is not your thing, why not take a swim in one of our leisure centres, join a seated exercise class or simply dance around your kitchen.

Feeling inspired? Visit www.thriveleisure.co.uk and www.durham.gov.uk/countryside for more ideas.

For more information about mental health support, visit www.durham.gov.uk/adultmentalhealthsupport

Cycling in County Durham

Make every ride count this May by taking part in the **Bike Month Challenge**.

Organised by Love to Ride, the challenge encourages people to set a riding goal for the month of May and log their rides on www.lovetoride.net/uk

For inspiration on where to cycle visit www.durham.gov.uk/cycling and, if you don't have a bike, visit www.durham.gov.uk/borrowabike to see if you qualify for a free bike loan through our Borrow a Bike scheme.



Feeling the power

The benefits of strength training exercises cannot be overestimated, especially as we get older and muscle mass and bone density decrease. Regular gym-goer and powerlifting champion Gavin Walker explains how at 84-years-old he has no plans of stopping.

Gavin Walker is a popular figure at Abbey Leisure Centre on the outskirts of Durham City. He has been training at the venue for almost 30 years, while competing in powerlifting competitions all over the world.

Gavin, from Pity Me, first started lifting weights 60 years ago and has been hooked ever since. Discovering powerlifting – a sport that originated in America in the 1960s – strengthened his passion and he went on to win both national and international titles. His most recent victory was in March when he triumphed in his age and bodyweight class in the bench press competition at the British Powerlifting Championships. Gavin pressed an impressive 85.5kg, setting a new British record in his class.

And while Gavin loves the thrill of competing, he's also a strong advocate for resistance training at all levels.

"Lifting weights really helps to maintain bone density and increases muscle mass, which decrease as you get older," he said. "It also helps with concentration and makes me feel more alert, not just when I am training, but when I am doing other activities too."

"If anyone is interested in powerlifting or weight training but is nervous about going to a gym, I would encourage them to give it a go. You can start off with a few gentle exercises and build up from there."

"I have been training at Abbey Leisure Centre since I retired in the 1990s and I will keep training as long as I am able. The staff are so welcoming and helpful, and the equipment is fantastic too since the refurbishment."

Lisa Liddy, a leisure assistant at Abbey Leisure Centre, was encouraged by Gavin to take up powerlifting and describes him as an inspiration.



"Weight training is incredibly important," she said. "It's all about functionality and ensuring we have the strength to continue to do everyday tasks as we get older."

"I think the great thing about Abbey and the other Thrive leisure centres is that they are really inclusive. There are people of all ages and fitness levels here. All new members receive a free fundamentals session, and we can also create individual workouts based on your personal fitness goals. It's a very supportive and welcoming environment."

thrive 

To find out more, visit www.thriveleisure.co.uk

Monday 10 June to Saturday 31 August
Bishop Auckland Town Hall

Carboniferous Monsters: 100 Million Years Before the Dinosaurs

Step back to the Carboniferous period, 100 million years before the dinosaurs, at this free exhibition at Bishop Auckland Town Hall.

Visit tropical forests and swamps teeming with bizarre and ferocious ancient monsters, some of which had larger teeth than T. Rex. Meet the dinosaurs' distant ancestors, the very first reptiles, the largest creepy-crawlies ever to live, and prehistoric animals unlike anything you've ever seen before.

Find out what County Durham was like 300 million years ago and explore how the remains of prehistoric plants formed the coal that powered the industrial revolution and the climate change we all face today.

Suitable for prehistoric monster fans of all ages.

www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk

Tuesday 16 to Saturday 27 July
Gala Durham

Peter Pan and Wendy A Gala Durham Production

Wendy is 13 and fed up of everything.

All she wants is an adventure, so when she finds herself lost in an enchanted forest, and meets a magical boy called Peter and a beautiful fairy called Tinkerbell, she is so excited.

Together a real adventure begins, with pirates and the dastardly Captain Hook after them – but Wendy soon realises that what's really important might be waiting back at home...

From the producers of *Alice In Wonderland* and *Cinderella*, come fly with us for Gala Durham's twist on J.M. Barrie's classic tale.

Recommended age: 5+

£20 (£18 concession), £70 family ticket (minimum of one child under 16).

03000 266 600 www.galadurham.co.uk

PETER PAN



BY J.M. BARRIE

ADAPTED BY LAURA TURNER



Gala Durham

Gala Durham

Thursday 30 and Friday 31 May,
11am and 2pm

Bishop Auckland Town Hall

Saturday 1 June, 11am and
2pm

The Three Bears

Each day, the Three Bears head into the woods to collect interesting things to re-use in their home.



Bishop Auckland Town Hall

Soon their cosy house is turned upside down by a colourful whirlwind that threatens to sit in their chairs, eat their porridge and sleep in their beds. It's Goldilocks! Presented by Kitchen Zoo, every show is relaxed so join us for this friendly and fun theatre experience for children aged six and under and their grown-ups.

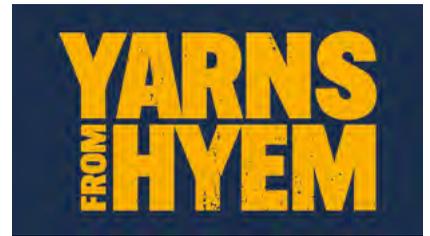
£8, £30 family ticket (min. two under 16s).

Gala Durham

Friday 31 May, 7.30pm

Yarns From Hyem

A top team of regional actors, directors and producers bring to life four hilarious and heart-warming short plays from acclaimed and emerging North East writers. Supported by Arts Council England, *Yarns from Hyem* takes you through the highs and lows of love, loss and hope, making you laugh and cry in a production that champions regional talent... Age restriction: 15+ £10.



Friday 7 June, 1.30pm and 5pm and Saturday 8 June,
11am and 2pm

Horrible Histories: Rotten Royals

We all want to meet people from history. The trouble is everyone's dead. So *Horrible Histories* is back with revolting rulers and mad monarchs from Britain's barmy past.

Would you be wooed by Richard the Lionheart? Are you ready for a date with King Edward I? Would you be shaken or stirred by Richard III?

Boasting the funniest and most outrageous regal scenes from the hit *Barmy Britain* shows, *Rotten Royals* promises Durham will be most amused. It's history with the nasty bits left in.

Recommended age: 5+ £16.50 (£14.50 concession), £58 family ticket (min. two under 16s).



Wednesday 19 June, 7.30pm

Ballet Cymru: Romeo a Juliet

Ballet Cymru presents an extraordinary adaptation of Shakespeare's masterpiece *Romeo and Juliet*. Intense fighting, passionate duets and universal themes echo through dramatic and lyrical choreography.

Exquisite costumes and extraordinary video projections create a world of danger and excitement where two young lovers are caught in an age-old feud.

£18 (£16 concession).



Bishop Auckland Town Hall



Thursday 13 June, 7.30pm

Frogнал & Fox – A Life In Song

Dive into a showbiz world full of glamour, optimism, rivalry and acceptance. Meet Margaret Frogнал and Adele Fox, two fading performers, as they showcase their talents accompanied by a bemused and cynical pianist. Beneath the theatrical camaraderie lurks a tension, but what is it and will it be resolved? Featuring songs by Cole Porter, the Gershwins, Stephen Sondheim and Noel Coward, this cabaret-style show is not to be missed.

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

03000 269 524

www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk



Binchester Roman Fort



Open daily 10am-4.30pm until Friday 1 November

Event days:

Monday 27 May and **Sunday 25 to Monday 26 August**

Experience the sights and sounds of the Roman Empire at one of Binchester's popular re-enactment days. On event days, the programme of activities commences at 11am and will be repeated at 2pm. For further details, visit the website.

01388 663089

www.durham.gov.uk/binchester



Beamish Museum

**Monday 1 July
to Tuesday 3
September**

Summer of Fun

This summer, Beamish Museum invites you to take a tram ride

back in time for a range of enjoyable activities lined up every day during the local school holidays (1 July to 3 September). From the 1900s Town, Colliery and Pit Village to the 1950s Town, 1940s Farm and Pockerley Old Hall – costumed folk will lead a host of activities for people of all ages across the site.



0191 370 4000 www.beamish.org.uk/whats-on

The Bowes Museum

**Friday 21
and Saturday
22 June**

Summer market

Browse dozens of market stalls selling a wide variety of

locally produced wares from small and artisan businesses at this popular event. Please see The Bowes Museum's website for more information and prices.



**Saturday 20 July
to Sunday 19
January**

Kith and Kinship: Cornish and Lowry

Experience rarely seen and often overlooked works by Northern artists, Norman Cornish and LS Lowry, in this powerful exhibition celebrating the region's distinctive industry, emotive landscapes and playful recreation activities. Over 50 of the artists' paintings, drawings and sketchbooks spotlight their friends, neighbours, passers-by and relatives in familiar scenes from across the region.

01833 690606

www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/



Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May

Durham Pride

The Sands, Durham City

Durham Pride is returning this May and promises to be the biggest celebration of LGBT+ diversity County Durham has ever seen. On Saturday 25 May, the theme will be Pride in the Armed Forces, and LGBT+ service personnel past and present will be celebrated. Highlights will include live music, food, bars, market stalls, a fun fair and military displays at the Sands. The event continues the following day with a march setting off from Durham Cathedral at 11am followed by a day of entertainment, speakers and more at The Sands. **Saturday 10p. Sunday £8.**

To book, search for 'Durham Pride 2024' at www.eventbrite.co.uk



Wednesday 24 to Sunday 28 July

Durham Fringe Festival

Various locations in Durham City

Now in its fourth year, Durham Fringe Festival is fast becoming one of the region's most popular comedy and performing arts events. This year's festival looks set to be one of the best to date, with shows taking place in stunning venues across Durham City over five fun-filled days.

From stand-up comedy, live music and drama to dance, magic and so much more – there is something for everyone, including a fantastic selection of family-friendly acts.

To view the full programme and buy tickets, visit www.durhamfringe.co.uk

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



Last Friday of the month until 25 October, 4pm-9pm

Bishop Auckland Street Food Market

Bishop Auckland's open-air Street Food Market is back bringing food and entertainment from across the region. With more than 15 diverse and delicious street food pop-ups dishing out a variety of flavours, local craft brewers and multiple live performances, there is something for everyone. **Free.** 07958 993 940

Last Sunday of the month, 8.45am Mental Health Swims

Slope Beach, Seaham, SR7 7EE

Mental Health Swims is an award-winning, mental health peer support community, which hosts free, safe and inclusive swim meet-ups across the country, including regular sessions at Slope Beach in Seaham. **Free but booking is required.**

www.mentalhealthswims.co.uk

Mon, Wed, Thurs and Sat afternoons until late September, from 1.30pm

Croquet Durham

Chester-le-Street Bowls Club, Riverside, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3PW

If you are looking for an activity that is sociable, outdoors, involves moderate exercise, no prior experience and is suitable for a wide age range, why not try Golf Croquet with Croquet Durham? New recruits are always welcome, and all members can use the club's equipment and access coaching from more experienced players. To find out more, contact admin@croquetdurham.org.uk www.croquetdurham.org

ONGOING EVENTS



Daily, 10am-4pm

Gruffalo 25th Birthday Trail

Hamsterley Forest, DL13 3NL

It's the Gruffalo's 25th birthday and families are invited to join in the celebrations at Hamsterley Forest. Work together to search for missing birthday party items along the Gruffalo Trail, while learning about the plants and animals that live in the forest. **Trail packs £4 each.** 01388 488312 www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest

MAY



Wednesday 22 May, 10.30am

Celebrate Local and Community History Month with Glenda Young

Pelton Library, the Lavender Centre, Pelton, Chester-le-Street, DH2 1HS

Join bestselling author Glenda Young for an illustrated talk on her new historical novel *The Toffee Factory Girls*, inspired by Horner's toffee factory in Chester-le-Street. **Free but booking is required.** 03000 269515 pelton.lib@durham.gov.uk

Wednesday 22 May, 1.30pm

Flower Demonstration

Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggin Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0PB

Lanchester Flower Club is hosting a demonstration by Susan Hall with the theme *'Inspirational Treasures'*. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served and the floral arrangements will be raffled. **£7.** 01207 521275

Tuesday 28 May, 10am-12noon

May Forest Club

Hardwick Park, Sedgfield, TS21 2DN

Forest Club is a hands-on experience aimed at teaching youngsters under five about the natural world. The sessions are play-based and offer a variety of familiar and new activities for children to try in the park's outdoor learning area. Children must be accompanied by an adult. **£8.50 per child.** 01740 621505 www.durham.gov.uk/hardwickevents

Wednesday 29 May, 10am and 1pm

Unicorns and Dragons

Wharton Park, Durham City, DH1 4FJ

Children are invited on a mystical adventure exploring the world of unicorns and dragons through themed games and creative activities across Wharton Park. Children must be accompanied by an adult. **£10 per child.** 03000 262 655 www.durham.gov.uk/whartonparkevents

JUNE



Saturday 8 June, 10am-3pm

Reading the Landscape

Bowlees Visitor Centre, Newbiggin, DL12 0XF

Join local geologist Brian Young for a day exploring how to read the stunning landscapes of the North Pennines. Find out how geological maps are made and how to use them before enjoying a gentle three mile walk, taking in the rocks and geological features along the way. **£6.** 01388 528801 www.northpennines.org.uk/bowlees-visitor-centre

Saturday 8 June, 7.30pm

D-Day Anniversary Concert – 80 Years On!

The Witham, Horse Market, Barnard Castle, DL12 8LY

Enjoy great music from films, shows and popular culture of the era performed by St Mary's Community Orchestra and Community Choir. Singalongs, foot-tappers and a stirring closing sequence will give a musical salute to the brave veterans of "the longest day". **£5-£8.** 01833 631107 www.thewitham.org.uk

Saturday 8 to Sunday 9 June

Durham Regatta

Regatta Enclosure, Old Elvet, Durham City, DH1 3BN

Experience thrilling racing, live music, street performers and stalls at the 191st Durham Regatta. **Adults £5, concessions and children aged five to 16 £3.** www.durham-regatta.org.uk

Wednesday

12 to Sunday 15 June, various times



The Little Mermaid

Park View Theatre, Church Chare, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3QA

Inspired by one of Hans Christian Anderson's most beloved stories and the classic Disney animated film, *The Little Mermaid* is a beautiful love story for all ages, with irresistible songs that will captivate audiences. **Adults £14, children and concessions £12.** 0191 388 3362 www.ticketsource.co.uk/dryburntheatricalworkshop

JULY



Saturday 13 July, from 8.30am

Durham Miners' Gala

Various locations, Durham City

Be a part of the world's greatest celebration of community, international solidarity and working class culture. Watch as beautiful banners are carried through the medieval city to the sound of brass band music, creating a wonderful feel of street theatre. **Free.** www.durhamminers.org/gala



Saturday 13 July and Sunday 14 July, 11am-8pm

Seaham Carnival

Terrace Green, North Terrace, Seaham, SR7 7EU

Enjoy entertainment for all the family at Seaham Carnival, including live music from local acts and the UK's best tribute acts, big screen film showings, theatre and much more. **Free.** 0191 581 8034

This is durham

Find more events and activities at

www.thisisdurham.com/whats-on



Tuesday 23 July, 7pm
Pride and Prejudice

Durham Cathedral, Durham City, DH1 3EQ

Step back in time more than two hundred years and meet Elizabeth Bennet and her sisters as they navigate the mire of manners of regency society. With stunning period costume, timeless wit, and a romantic original score, Chapterhouse Theatre Company's *Pride and Prejudice* is a faithful telling of Jane Austen's greatest work. **Adults £20, students and children 5-16 years £12, under 5s free.** 0191 386 4266 www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/visit-us/concerts-events

Saturday 27 July, 12noon-11pm
Ayclife Festival

Oakleaf Sports Field, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QZ

Beyond Madness, That's What I Call the 80s, Manchester Anthems and Jukebox Vandals are just some of the acts performing this year. This family-friendly live music festival is not to be missed. **Advanced tickets: Adults £19, 14-17 years £14, 5-13 years £1, under 5s free.** www.ayclive.co.uk

AUGUST



Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 August, 10am-4pm

Way Back When: 1940s Weekend at Ushaw

Ushaw Historic House, Chapels and Gardens, DH7 7DW

Travel back in time to the 1940s when this popular event returns for its fourth year. Highlights will include military and 1940s vehicles, a vintage vocalist, 1940s hair stylist, British Army cuisine and objects and archives from 1940s Durham. **Entry free with Ushaw annual membership or day pass.** 0191 373 8500 www.ushaw.org/whatson



Thursday 15 August, 10am-4pm
Crazy Creatures at Durham University Botanic Garden

Botanic Garden, Hollingside Lane, South Road, Durham City, DH1 3TN

Get interactive with crazy creatures who are visiting the garden for the day, including rabbits, frogs, snake, spiders and mice. **Adults £5, children free.** 0191 334 2887 www.durham.ac.uk/things-to-do/venues/botanic-garden

Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 August, 10am-4.30pm (Sat) 4pm (Sun)

Streatlam Show

Streatlam Events Field, Barnard Castle, DL12 8RQ

Get set for a fun-filled weekend of vintage, modern and unusual entertainment and exhibits. Expect tractor pulling, circus trickery and illusions, exotic animals, live entertainment, food trucks, beer tents and much more. **Adults £12, concessions £11, 9-16 years £6, 8 and under free. Camping (Thur - Sun) £135.** enquiries@streatlamshow.co.uk www.streatlamshow.co.uk



Monday 26 August, 11am-4pm
Durham Classic Car Show

Durham Market Place, Durham City, DH1 3NJ

Admire more than 100 classic cars from this country and overseas at Durham Classic Car Show. Chat with the owners and photograph your favourites at this family-friendly event. **Free.** 0191 384 6153 www.durhamclassiccarshow.co.uk



Saturday 31 August
Weardale Show
Show Field, St John's Chapel, DL13 1QF

The 154th Weardale Show will be an action-packed celebration of rural life. Highlights include livestock exhibitions and pony competitions in the main ring, craft and horticultural tent, children's tent, inflatables zone and climbing wall. **Advanced tickets: Adults £5, children £3. Show day tickets: Adults £7, children £4.** www.weardale-show.co.uk

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 1 September, 11.30am, 1pm and 2.30pm

Children's Interactive Theatre: Thumbelina!



Raby Castle, Staindrop, DL2 3AH

Join Raby Castle's team of fairy spotters as they attempt to photograph the most famous of all the fairies, Thumbelina. This outdoor performance walk will encourage children to follow clues, chat to the characters and solve puzzles in an exciting celebration of the hidden world of nature. **Adults £10, children £12.** 01833 660202 www.rabycastle.co.uk/events

Friday 6 to Sunday 15 September
Heritage Open Days



Various locations across County Durham

England's largest festival of history and culture brings together over 2,000 local people and organisations, and thousands of volunteers. Every year places across the country throw open their doors to celebrate their heritage, community and history. It's a chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences for **free.** www.heritageopendays.org.uk



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