DURHAM MAGAZINE

DIGITAL EDITION
May 2026

Compiled from stories published online in May 2026



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Every photo is numbered with its page. Spot a face, turn to the number.

On the cover: County Durham Business Sponsors 193rd Durham Regatta, page 7. Photo supplied by The Banks Group, Durham Regatta sponsor.

This is a look-back edition, put together in November 2026 from stories that appeared online in May 2026. Durham Magazine's first digital edition was published in November 2026.

durhammagazine.co.uk



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Your story here



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Photo supplied by Durham County Council, The Story

DURHAM

Rare First World War Ledger Returns to County Durham Archive

A rare handwritten ledger recording the names of hundreds of North East men who volunteered to serve during the First World War has been brought back to the region.

The century-old register contains the names of around 900 volunteers who enlisted over the course of just four days in December 1915. Many were employees of Palmers Shipbuilding and Iron Company in Jarrow, which had recently suffered a devastating German Zeppelin raid that claimed the lives of 17 workers and left 72 others injured.

Following its discovery at a car boot sale, the ledger was put up for sale at auction, where it was bought by the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Friends. The Friends then presented it to The Story, Durham County Council's culture and heritage venue, which is the permanent home of the DLI Collection and Archive.

For Sid Patterson, the DLI Friends trustee who attended the auction, the ledger is especially poignant.

He said:

"I grew up in the Salt Meadows estate in Gateshead, which is where many of these men were from; some even lived on my street. "It was a very close-knit community when I lived there, and the fact so many men enlisted following the attack on Palmers (despite shipyard

"By placing the ledger in The Story's care, the Friends have ensured it will be preserved and accessible for people to view for generations to come."

workers being a reserved occupation) shows it was then too. "Reading their names and knowing so many didn't make it home, is very moving. "As a group, we felt the ledger should be in County Durham because it's a local artefact. At The Story, the public will be able to see it and learn from it, rather than it being hidden away in a private collection."

The volunteers named within the ledger signed up under the Derby Scheme, the final national recruitment campaign before conscription was introduced in 1916. Written across 23 double pages are the men's names, ages, heights, chest measurements and distinguishing marks.

Cllr Andrew Harrison, Durham County Council's Armed Forces Champion, said:

"Ledgers such as these are incredibly rare and certainly don't come up for sale very often. That's why we are so grateful to the DLI Friends for bringing it back to the North East as a valuable addition to the DLI Collection and Archive. "What I find particularly striking about the ledger is the fact that the hundreds of men listed within its pages signed up over four days, in just one small area. It really brings home the scale of the conflict, the sacrifices made by those who served and the impact it must have had on their communities. "By placing the ledger in The Story's care, the Friends have ensured it will be preserved and accessible for people to view for generations to come."

Appointments can be made to view the ledger in The Story's collection room. To book, visit www.thestorydurham.org/access-our-collections.

Alongside the DLI Collection and Archive, The Story contains four other historic collections, including six miles of archives covering 900 years of history. It is also the home of the County Registration Service, a permanent exhibition about the history of County Durham and its people, a search and discover research space, and a café.

The Story is open every day and entry is free. To find out more, visit www.thestorydurham.org

Registered as a charity in 1976, the DLI Friends was set up to buy regimental relics and research material for the DLI Collection, helping to ensure these items remain in County Durham. Its members also deliver talks and workshops in schools and help people with historical research, including a drop-in session at The Story between 10am and 2pm on the last Thursday of the month.

For more information, visit www.dlifriends.com.

By Zoe Online 6 May 2026
Read more: **durhammagazine.co.uk**

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New Durham Arts Destination The Light Names Experienced Curator as Artistic Director



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An experienced curator and producer has been appointed to head up a new cultural destination ahead of its launch later this summer.

Tony Guillan has been named artistic director of The Light, Durham County Council's newest cultural venue and visitor attraction in Durham.

Bringing together contemporary art and creativity with local history, scientific discovery and technological innovation, The Light will explore the most important ideas of our time through an ambitious programme of exhibitions, events, immersive experiences and new commissions.

The venue represents a major investment in creativity, culture and community, providing a place for innovation to thrive, for people to gather and for artists to collaborate, while also creating a new cultural and tourist destination for the North East.

Located at Aykley Heads, The Light occupies the former home of the Durham Light Infantry Museum and Durham Art Gallery, which has been transformed into a contemporary cultural space capable of hosting world-class exhibitions. A dedicated DLI Gallery will also celebrate County Durham's military heritage and connect it with new audiences.

Tony brings more than 15 years' experience working across museums, festivals and major cultural institutions, with a practice focused on immersive visual and performing arts, digital culture and emerging forms of storytelling.

Online 19 May 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/new-durham-arts-destination-the-light-names-experienced-curator-as-artistic-director**

County Durham Business Sponsors 193rd Durham Regatta



Photo supplied by The Banks Group, Durham Regatta sponsor

The Banks Group has been announced as a new sponsor for this year's Durham Regatta.

The North East-based property, housebuilding and mining firm, which is headquartered in County Durham, has joined as one of the principal supporters of the prestigious event's 193rd edition, taking place on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 June as part of the company's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The financial contribution that the family-owned firm is making has helped organisers to hold both its competition entry fees and the cost of tickets for the Regatta Enclosure on the riverbank at the same level as last year.

Banks' funding will also support the Regatta's Volunteer Hub, which is a vital part of Regatta operations that oversees the activities and welfare of volunteers over the weekend.

First held in 1834, Durham Regatta is regarded as the north of England's premier rowing event and attracts entries from schools, universities and rowing clubs right across the UK.

Around 2,000 competitors will take part in the 200 races that will be held on each day of the event, with more than 10,000 spectators expected to line the banks of the Wear over the weekend.

The Regatta also sees a range of bands, performers, food stalls, family attractions and businesses setting up along the riverbank, with many of the attractions available free of charge.

The Lord-Lieutenant of County Durham, Mike Butterwick CBE, and the new Mayor of Durham City will be attending the Regatta and presenting prizes to some of the winners.

Michael Laing, chairman of the Durham Regatta committee, says:

"The Regatta is rooted firmly in County Durham's history and is always a great event to be part of, whether you're competing on the water, supporting from the riverbank or just enjoying all the attractions that form part of the day.

"We aim to make the Regatta as accessible as we can to as many competitors as possible, regardless of their background, and holding our race entry fees is an important part of that process.

By Durham Magazine Online 26 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/county-durham-business-sponsors-193rd-durham-regatta**

DURHAM

Durham Brass Festival Reveals Locations for 2026 Big and Little Brass Bashes



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Photo supplied by Durham County Council, Durham Brass Festival organiser

Locations have now been revealed for one of the most popular features of Durham Brass Festival.

The festival's much-loved Big and Little Brass Bashes will once again head out on tour this year, bringing a series of free live performances to towns and communities across County Durham.

With new locations as well as firm fan favourites, organisers Durham County Council have promised a party at every location.

Online 25 May 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/durham-brass-festival-reveals-locations-for-2026-big-and-little-brass-bashes**

DURHAM

Into the Light Launches £80,000 Creative Commissions Programme Across County Durham



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Into the Light has returned with a major boost for the region's creative sector, announcing its new Cultivate Commissions programme offering creative opportunities worth almost £80,000 in total.

During its latest Spotlight Series event at Redhills Durham Miners Hall, Into the Light welcomed around 100 artists, creative freelancers and cultural organisations for a collaborative gathering focused on building connections, sharing ideas and exploring ways to strengthen arts and culture across County Durham.

By Zoe Online 20 May 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/into-the-light-launches-80000-creative-commissions-programme-across-county-durham**

DURHAM

Free Circus Festival Returns to Spennymoor Town Centre This Weekend



The circus is rolling into town this weekend with a packed programme of free entertainment and family-friendly activities.

Durham County Council is once again bringing a vibrant family fun event to Spennymoor Town Centre this Saturday, 23 May.

Funded by the All Together for Spennymoor Pride in Place Board, the event will feature street performers, walkabout entertainment, daring acrobats and a range of hands-on circus workshops for visitors to try themselves.

The activity-packed day will be held in the marketplace from 11am to 4pm and promises to be a day of free family fun, hosted by Let's Circus.

By Durham Magazine Online 20 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/free-circus-festival-returns-to-spennymoor-town-centre-this-weekend**

DURHAM

Star-Studded Culinary Lineup Revealed for Seaham Food Festival 2026

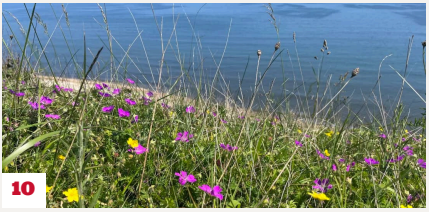


Get ready for a culinary star-studded weekend at the Seaham Food Festival! Hosted by Durham County Council, this much-loved event returns on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 August, bringing together top-tier TV presenters and iconic baking judges for a spectacular celebration of food, fun, and entertainment.

Headlining this year's festival on the Sunday is popular presenter Matt Tebbutt, known for his incredible work on Saturday Kitchen on BBC One and Best Bites on BBC Two. Plus, he has recently been announced as the third judge on BBC's MasterChef the Professionals.

By Durham Magazine Online 29 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/star-studded-culinary-lineup-revealed-for-seaham-food-festival-2026**

In brief



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DURHAM

£1 Million Project Restores Rare Coastal Grasslands Along Durham Heritage Coast

A major project to restore coastal grasslands along the Durham Heritage Coast has now been successfully completed.

By Durham Magazine Online 23 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/1-million-project-restores-rare-coastal-grasslands-along-durham-heritage-coast**



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DURHAM

Thousands of Peg Dolls to Go on Display for Stockton and Darlington Railway Celebrations

More than 10,000 decorated peg dolls created to celebrate 200 years since the world's first passenger railway journey began in County Durham are set to go on public display next week.

Online 21 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/thousands-of-peg-dolls-to-go-on-display-for-stockton-and-darlington-railway-celebrations**



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Photo: Peter Haygarth

DURHAM

Bishop Auckland Photographer Showcases Stunning African Wildlife Images at Gallerina

Peter Haygarth's beautiful photographs have been published in newspapers around the world and in the National History Museums in Paris and London.

By Durham Magazine Online 31 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/bishop-auckland-photographer-showcases-stunning-african-wildlife-images-at-gallerina**



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DURHAM

New Bishop Auckland Bus Station Set to Open This Weekend

A brand-new bus station in Bishop Auckland is set to open to the public this weekend.

Durham County Council will officially unveil the new Bishop Auckland Bus Station on Sunday 10 May.

By Durham Magazine Online 9 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/new-bishop-auckland-bus-station-set-to-open-this-weekend**

In brief



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DURHAM

Durham Energy Council Pushing for Fairer Renewable Transition in the North East

Threads in the Ground has warned that working-class communities must play a central role in the transition to green energy and future climate action policies.

By Zoe Online 16 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/durham-energy-council-pushing-for-fairer-renewable-transition-in-the-north-east**



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DURHAM

Dr Louise Newson Bringing Hormone Health Tour to Darlington Hippodrome

Dr Louise Newson, founder of the free Balance app, which has been downloaded more than 1.5 million times, as well as the Newson Clinic and the award-winning Dr Louise Newson Podcast, is preparing to launch a nationwide UK tour focused on educating audiences about the science and history of hormones.

By Durham Magazine Online 12 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/dr-louise-newson-bringing-hormone-health-tour-to-darlington-hippodrome**



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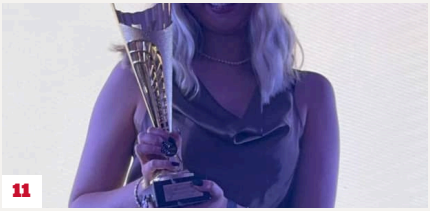
DURHAM

New Durham Explorer Bus Routes to Connect Visitors with County Attractions

Three new bus routes are being introduced across County Durham to help residents and visitors discover some of the region's most popular attractions.

By Durham Magazine Online 18 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/new-durham-explorer-bus-routes-to-connect-visitors-with-county-attractions**



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DURHAM

Miss Durham Wins Top Influencer Award

Miss Durham 2026 is using her platform to champion awareness, individuality, and positive change, proudly representing County Durham as a local girl from Darlington.

By Editing Team Online 6 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/miss-durham-wins-top-influencer-award**

In brief



NEWCASTLE

Mayor Kim McGuinness Awards £225k to Support Older People Across the North East

Dementia-friendly music sessions, community lunch clubs and fuel poverty prevention schemes are among the projects benefiting from the latest round of Kim McGuinness's £1 million Mayor's Opportunity Fund.

By Zoe Eastman Online 14 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/mayor-kim-mcguinness-awards-225k-to-support-older-people-across-the-north-east**



NEWCASTLE

New Newcastle Mural Celebrates Community Spirit Across Generations

New art mural by inter-generational community groups unveiled to celebrate caring spirit of Galafield Family Hub.

Joint initiative between Action for Children and Newcastle City Council Arts Development programme.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 12 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/new-newcastle-mural-celebrates-community-spirit-across-generations**



Photo: Steve Brock

NEWCASTLE

Music to Return to The People's Kitchen Thanks to Expert Piano Tuner

The People's Kitchen is set to be filled with music once again, thanks to a local piano tuner who has stepped in to restore an ageing instrument that had long since fallen silent.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 28 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/music-to-return-to-the-peoples-kitchen-thanks-to-expert-piano-tuner**



Photo: Pawel Gajek, The Bigger Picture Agency

NEWCASTLE

Maritime Volunteer Service to Host Newcastle Quayside Open Day

Maritime Volunteer Service will welcome members of the public to a special open day at Newcastle Quayside on Saturday 6 June from 10am until 1pm.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 30 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/maritime-volunteer-service-to-host-newcastle-quayside-open-day**

In brief



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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Celebrates Huge Success of BBC Radio 1's Big Weekend Festival

It was a landmark weekend for Sunderland as BBC Radio 1's Big Weekend brought more than 100 internationally renowned artists to the city for three unforgettable days of live music.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 27 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-celebrates-huge-success-of-bbc-radio-1s-big-weekend-festival**



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SUNDERLAND

Seaside Awards and Blue Flag Honour for Sunderland's Beaches

Sunderland's coastline has once again been recognised among the best in the country after Keep Britain Tidy awarded Roker Beach and Seaburn Beach prestigious Seaside Awards for 2026.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 19 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/seaside-awards-and-blue-flag-honour-for-sunderlands-beaches**



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CONSETT

60 Volunteers Collect 50 Bags in Lanchester Clean-Up

Litter is more than just an eyesore. Discarded packaging, plastic bottles, cans and other waste can harm wildlife, pollute waterways and make communities feel neglected.

Words and photographs by George Ledger, Communities in Focus Online 6 May 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/60-volunteers-collect-50-bags-in-lanchester-clean-up**



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CONSETT

Funeral Director Stuart Wright Balances Career and Musical Passion

Born in Leeds, Stuart Wright moved to the North East when his father became a Verger at Durham Cathedral. Now living in Hollinside, Stuart has enjoyed a lifelong passion for music alongside a long career in the funeral profession.

Words and photographs by George Ledger, Communities in Focus Online 17 May 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/funeral-director-stuart-wright-balances-career-and-musical-passion**

In brief



Photo: Mark Wilkinson, Communities in Focus

CONSETT

Sarah Revives Historic Ice Cream Shop with Family Roots

Talk about tip of the iceberg. When you enter the old ice cream shop little do you realise it has a history going back to 1937.

Online 19 May 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/sarah-revives-historic-ice-cream-shop-with-family-roots**

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