DURHAM MAGAZINE

DIGITAL EDITION
September 2026

Compiled from stories published online in September 2026



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DURHAM MAGAZINE

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

On the cover: Miss Durham Nicole Hanson Unites Car Culture and Pageantry to Raise £1,270 for Cancer Research UK, page 8. Photo supplied by Nicole Hanson, Miss Durham.

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

durhammagazine.co.uk



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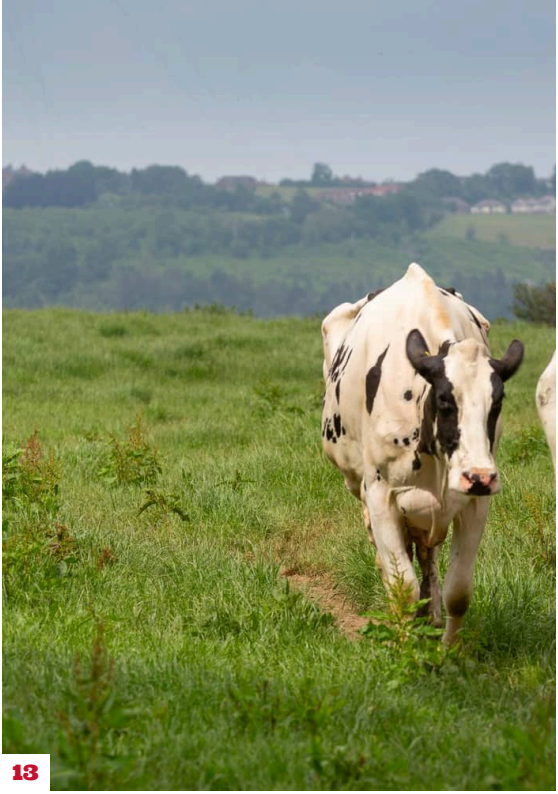

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Your story here



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DURHAM

The Light Durham Announces Autumn and Winter Events Programme

Durham City's newest cultural venue has announced an ambitious programme of events, talks, performances and creative experiences designed to brighten the darker months ahead.

Inspired by its inaugural exhibitions, We Are The Durhams: The Durham Light Infantry Exhibition and Victory Over the Sun: Encounters with Light, The Light's autumn and winter programme invites audiences of all ages to explore art, history, imagination and creativity.

From live music and networking events to creative workshops for adults and a book club with a twist, the Durham County Council venue is quickly establishing itself as a must-visit destination for culture, creativity and community.

The Light opened to the public in Aykley Heads last month, with more than 5,000 people visiting in the opening week alone. Visitors enjoyed an unforgettable programme of activities to celebrate the launch, and the response to both exhibitions and the venue as a whole has been overwhelmingly positive.

The fun experiences and creative opportunities will continue throughout autumn and winter,

including a weekly programme of events that will establish Thursday evenings as a regular fixture in the region's cultural calendar.

After Dark, meanwhile, will bring together exhibitions, live performances, music, food, installations and more on the first Friday night of the month.

Families can also enjoy a host of daytime activities, including a week of creative workshops during October half-term, and Sensory Saturdays, regular artist-led sessions and sensory play experiences for younger children.

Cllr Karen Allison, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for leisure, tourism, regeneration and high street, said:

"The autumn/winter programme reflects our ambition to create opportunities for people of all ages to connect with culture in meaningful ways. We want The Light to become a part of people's everyday lives, whether that be as a place to view amazing exhibitions and explore new creative pursuits or as somewhere to catch up with friends.

"We're delighted the venue has already welcomed thousands of visitors. County Durham's visitor economy is worth more than £1.5 billion a year and The Light is helping to boost this further, while raising our profile as a vibrant county to live, work, visit and invest."

Highlights of the autumn/winter programme include:

Thursday Evenings at The Light

The Salon: The North East's Creative Social: Curated by Create North, in partnership with The Light, The Salon invites artists, musicians, performers, writers, designers, filmmakers, producers, makers and other creatives to an evening of conversation, ideas and connection. First Thursday of the month, from 1 October.

Making History: History, memory and culture in conversation: This monthly series of talks, screenings, tours and discussions explores the relationship between history, heritage, art and culture. Inspired by We Are The Durhams: The Durham Light Infantry Exhibition, it examines how the past is interpreted, represented and reimagined through literature, film, television, photography, public art, music and popular culture. Second Thursday of the month, from 10 September.

I don't want to grow up: Creative workshops for adults: Through creative workshops, making sessions and artist-led activities, adults are encouraged to experiment, create and rediscover the joy of making. Third Thursday of the month from 17 September.

The Light Lounge: Live music and drinks after work: Enjoy cocktails, conversations and live performances as The Light café transforms into The Light Lounge. Third and fourth Thursday of the month from 17 September.

Tomorrow's Library: Not your average book club: From visionary novels and speculative fiction to groundbreaking science, philosophy and cultural criticism, Tomorrow's Library explores the ideas, inventions and creative works that have shaped the way people understand the future. Fourth Thursday of the month from 22 October.

After Dark

These monthly late-night events invite visitors to explore exhibitions in a new atmosphere, with each edition co-curated by a leading artist, musician, filmmaker or creative collaborator. Featuring art, music, performance, food, drink and more, After Dark will light up the first Friday of the month.

Online 10 September 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/the-light-durham-announces-autumn-and-winter-events-programme**

Bishop Auckland Wins Gold at Northumbria in Bloom Awards



Photo supplied by Hawkey PR for Bishop Auckland Town Council

Bishop Auckland has been recognised for its commitment to environmental improvement and civic pride after winning Gold in the Large Town category at the annual Northumbria in Bloom Awards.

Representatives from the Town Council's Greener Together Group travelled to Gateshead on Wednesday 16 September 2026 to attend the prestigious awards ceremony, where Bishop Auckland achieved a Gold Award in the Large Towns category, which saw them go on to beat strong competition from Alnwick, Durham and Chester-le-Street to take the top honour, of 'Best In Class'.

Mayor Michael Siddle, who chairs the Greener Together Group, said:

"We are absolutely delighted to have received Gold and to have been named the winner of the Large Town category. This achievement reflects the hard work, dedication and passion of so many individuals, community groups, and organisations who care deeply about Bishop Auckland. The recognition received by the other winners in our town demonstrates the strength of community spirit across Bishop Auckland. Everyone involved should be extremely proud of what has been achieved. Taking over the responsibility of Town Centre Planting from Durham County Council has been a huge step for the Town Council this year, not just in terms of financial investment but investment into partnerships and collaboration. The partnerships which we are building sees real action where people are coming together to transform spaces, improve biodiversity, and bring life and colour to disused spaces."

By Barbara Parker Online 22 September 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/bishop-auckland-wins-gold-at-northumbria-in-bloom-awards**

Bishop Auckland Football Club Joins Suicide Prevention Champion Initiative



Photo supplied by Durham County Council

Bishop Auckland Football Club has signed up to a new initiative seeking people who care about their community and can help others feel more comfortable talking about suicide and mental health.

Durham County Council is looking for Suicide Prevention Champions across County Durham as part of World Suicide Prevention Day, with the football club among the first to come forward.

The theme of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day is Changing the Narrative on Suicide, and it aims to inspire individuals, communities, organisations, and governments to engage in open and honest discussion about suicide and suicidal behaviour. It is hoped that by initiating these vital conversations, the day can break down barriers, raise awareness, and create a better culture of understanding and support.

The local authority is looking to demonstrate that anyone can make a difference by learning, raising awareness and helping people talk openly in supportive conversations.

Suicide Prevention Champions don't need to have any special qualifications. They encourage people to ask for help and look out for each other. As suicide can affect anyone, the council is looking for champions from all walks of life.

Cllr Howard Brown, Durham County Council Cabinet member for adult and health services, said:

"No one should have to suffer in silence, and the best way to tackle suicide as a community is to have open and honest discussions and break down those barriers that make it a taboo topic.

"As a Suicide Prevention Champion, you would be making a difference. You don't need to be a specialist; you just need to be someone with compassion and understanding."

Volunteers will: raise awareness of suicide prevention, help people talk openly, understand the signs of suicide, share information on support, and back local campaigns. This does not mean they will provide mental health crisis support; specialist services are available for this.

By Barbara Parker Online 11 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/bishop-auckland-football-club-joins-suicide-prevention-champion-initiative**

DURHAM

Miss Durham Nicole Hanson Unites Car Culture and Pageantry to Raise £1,270 for Cancer Research UK



8

Photo supplied by Nicole Hanson, Miss Durham

Since being crowned Miss Durham earlier this year, Nicole Hanson has used her platform to bridge two distinct passions: pageantry and motorsport.

Known throughout the local automotive community as an Abarth enthusiast and Fiat 500 fan, she is leveraging her audience of over 8,000 social media followers to bring car culture and beauty pageants together.

After putting her name forward for Miss Durham in October 2025 and completing her interview in January, Nicole was crowned in February, earning a direct place in the Miss Great Britain final.

By Barbara Parker Online 30 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/miss-durham-nicole-hanson-unites-car-culture-and-pageantry-to-raise-1270-for-cancer-research-uk**

DURHAM

Bishop Auckland Hospital Artwork Honours Patients' Cancer Journeys



8

A special tree symbolising hope, strength and life has begun to grow at Bishop Auckland Hospital, one fingerprint at a time.

Dame Sue Snowdon has become the first patient to add her fingerprint to a new wall mural at the hospital's Mara Unit, where she received chemotherapy treatment.

The tree has been created as a visual representation of the people cared for by the unit, with patients invited to add their fingerprints to its branches as leaves, gradually bringing the artwork to life.

By Barbara Parker Online 23 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/bishop-auckland-hospital-artwork-honours-patients-cancer-journeys**

DURHAM

K9 Freedom Fields Fun Dog Show to Raise Funds for Greyhounds Going Home



9

Dog lovers across County Durham are being invited to a fantastic afternoon of four-legged fun as K9 Freedom Fields host their Fun Dog Show on Sunday 13th September 2026.

Taking place at K9 Freedom Fields in Coxhoe, the event promises an afternoon packed with wagging tails, colourful rosettes and plenty of friendly competition, all while raising vital funds for Greyhounds Going Home, a charity helping greyhounds find loving new homes.

The show is open to dogs of all shapes, sizes and breeds, so whether you have a glamorous greyhound, a gorgeous rescue, a cheeky puppy or a magnificent mixed breed, there is a class to suit.

By Durham Magazine Online 10 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/k9-freedom-fields-fun-dog-show-to-raise-funds-for-greyhounds-going-home**

DURHAM

Bishop Auckland Heritage Festival returns with free talks, classic cars and local history displays



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Bishop Auckland Town Council will host the fourth annual Heritage Festival on Saturday 26 September, from 10am to 3pm, offering a full programme of free talks, heritage displays, exhibitions and interactive activities. The event celebrates the town's rich industrial and cultural heritage and is open to all.

By Durham Magazine Online 15 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/bishop-auckland-heritage-festival-returns-with-free-talks-classic-cars-and-local-history-displays**

In brief



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DURHAM

St John Ambulance Shares Life-Saving Skills for Save a Life September

St John Ambulance advocates that everyone should know the skills vital to try to save a life. Let's go through each of these in turn so you too can have awareness of what to do and know where you can get more information and help.

Online 28 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/st-john-ambulance-shares-life-saving-skills-for-save-a-life-september**



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DURHAM

County Durham Communities Invited to Join Big Autumn Clean

As autumn arrives and the nights begin to draw in, communities across County Durham are being invited to take part in the Big Autumn Clean.

Durham County Council has launched the new seasonal litter-picking campaign, building on the success of its annual Big Spring Clean.

By Barbara Parker Online 7 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/county-durham-communities-invited-to-join-big-autumn-clean**



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DURHAM

County Durham Residents Invited to Share Views on Heathland Grazing

People are being invited to share their views on proposed works that could support the future introduction of grazing cattle on a County Durham heathland.

Online 15 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/county-durham-residents-invited-to-share-views-on-heathland-grazing**



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DURHAM

Durham County Council Offers Free Passes and Prizes for National Fitness Day

Durham County Council is encouraging residents to improve their physical health this National Fitness Day.

By Barbara Parker Online 14 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/durham-county-council-offers-free-passes-and-prizes-for-national-fitness-day**

In brief



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DURHAM

Amazon Durham Supports Local Charities During Great North Run Weekend

Two local charities received a welcome boost during a busy Great North Run weekend, as employees at the Amazon fulfilment centre in Durham came together to pack and donate drinks, snacks and sweet treats to help keep their teams fuelled throughout a weekend of fundraising and racing.

Online 30 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/amazon-durham-supports-local-charities-during-great-north-run-weekend**



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DURHAM

Durham Looks for Creative Partner to Deliver Major 2027 Festival

An opportunity has opened for an experienced festival producer to help shape County Durham's next major festival.

Online 26 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/durham-looks-for-creative-partner-to-deliver-major-2027-festival**



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DURHAM

Second Young Futures Hub to Be Created in County Durham

A second Young Futures Hub is set to be created in County Durham following a successful funding bid.

Durham County Council has been selected by the government to establish the new hub, following the success of its pilot in Newton Aycliffe.

Online 23 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/second-young-futures-hub-to-be-created-in-county-durham**



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DURHAM

£2.94m Investment Supports A690 Junction Upgrades in County Durham

New safety measures have been installed at a County Durham junction as part of a £2.94 million investment programme.

By Durham Magazine Online 24 September 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/2-94m-investment-supports-a690-junction-upgrades-in-county-durham**

In brief



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NEWCASTLE

Tyne Rivers Trust Secures £249,579 National Lottery Funding

A £249,579 award from The National Lottery Heritage Fund will help North East environmental charity Tyne Rivers Trust invest in new staff, stronger systems and long-term resilience as it prepares for the next phase of its work.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 25 September 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/tyne-rivers-trust-secures-249579-national-lottery-funding**



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NEWCASTLE

Tyne and Wear Firefighters Inspire Next Generation Through Silver Axe Success

When Natalie Mortimer stepped onto the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service podium to receive the prestigious Silver Axe Award more than two decades ago, she had no idea where her career would take her.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 4 September 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/tyne-and-wear-firefighters-inspire-next-generation-through-silver-axe-success**



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NEWCASTLE

Sir Bobby Robson Institute Fundraising Enters Final £1m Phase

Fundraising for the Sir Bobby Robson Institute, a world-leading cancer drug trials centre for the region, has entered a crucial final phase, with the public being asked to help raise the final £1 million needed.

By Albert Nelson Online 17 September 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/sir-bobby-robson-institute-fundraising-enters-final-1m-phase**



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CONSETT

At 18, He Speaks for 46,000 Young People

By 18, Lanchester's Lucas Wainwright has already achieved more than many do in a lifetime.

Words and photographs by George Ledger, Communities in Focus Online 9 September 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/at-18-he-speaks-for-46000-young-people**

In brief



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CONSETT

Twenty Years of Teaching People to Breathe

For almost 20 years, Laura Ridgeon has been helping people improve their physical and mental wellbeing through gentle, accessible Hatha Yoga.

Words and photographs by George Ledger, Communities in Focus Online 9 September 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/twenty-years-of-teaching-people-to-breathe**



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CONSETT

What a Postcard Revealed: the Story of Joseph Thompson Maddison

In May, browsing online, I bought a postcard of Muggleswick Church. I did not know it would uncover the story of a young Weardale man who never came home.

By Paul Heatherington Online 13 September 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/what-a-postcard-revealed-joseph-thompson-maddison**



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CONSETT

Three Generations of Dairy Farming, and Counting

For almost 60 years the Bradley family has farmed the land around Lanchester, although their dairy farming story began even earlier in Langley Park.

Words and photographs by George Ledger, Communities in Focus Online 1 September 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/three-generations-of-dairy-farming-and-counting**



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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Restaurant Week Attracts Almost 15,000 Diners

Sunderland's recent Restaurant Week brought thousands of diners into the city and highlighted the growing popularity of the Healthy Plates initiative.

The latest Sunderland Restaurant Week began on 5 September, with almost 15,000 diners enjoying special deals at more than 60 eateries.

By Zoe Walker Online 26 September 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-restaurant-week-attracts-almost-15000-diners**

In brief



Photo: Clean Strength Media

SUNDERLAND

University of Sunderland Athlete Crowned Commonwealth Powerlifting Champion

An elite athlete from the University of Sunderland has been crowned 2026 Commonwealth Powerlifting Champion following an outstanding performance in Canada.

By Catherine Wilson Online 30 September 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/university-of-sunderland-athlete-crowned-commonwealth-powerlifting-champion**

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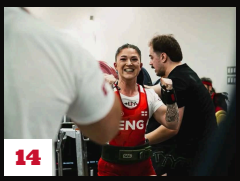

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