DURHAM MAGAZINE



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DIGITAL EDITION
October 2026

Compiled from stories published online in October 2026

DURHAM MAGAZINE

DIGITAL EDITION

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

On the cover: Bishop Auckland Celebrates Volunteers at Greener Together Awards, page 8. Photo supplied by Hawkey PR for Bishop Auckland Town Council.

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

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DURHAM

County Durham Man Living with Parkinson's Inspires Others Through the Power of Rowing

A County Durham man who has discovered the benefits of rowing in managing the physical and mental challenges of Parkinson's disease is sharing his inspiring story to encourage other men to take positive steps towards better health and wellbeing.

His story comes as Durham County Council's 'he thrives' campaign returns from 1 to 30 November, highlighting how physical activity, social connections and community involvement can make a meaningful difference to men's lives.

The council has teamed up with local clubs and organisations to deliver activities across its leisure centres and in local communities throughout the month. From rowing, golf, table tennis, walking cricket and squash to indoor bowls, hockey and dragon boat racing, there are plenty of ways for men to get involved, whatever their age or fitness level.

Sean Bell, 56, is one of the faces of this year's 'he thrives' campaign and is a firm believer in the benefits of movement for both physical and mental health.

Sean was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease

"There is something about the rhythm and repetition of rowing that demands concentration and commitment."

in December 2022. He had always led an active lifestyle, regularly working out in the gym and competing in cycling events.

After hearing about the 'he thrives' indoor rowing sessions delivered by Lambton Rowing Club last year, he decided to give them a go and now attends twice a week.

"During a session I feel energised and motivated," he said.

"There is something about the rhythm and repetition of rowing that demands concentration and commitment."

Sean describes the people around him as friendly, motivational and understanding of his condition. Being part of a club, working towards his own goals and encouraging others has helped him push himself further than he might have done exercising alone.

"I am not the man with Parkinson's who has turned up to exercise," he said.

"I am a member of a rowing club. Parkinson's may be part of my life, but it doesn't have to dictate what I do with it."

The 'he thrives' campaign follows the success of 'she thrives' earlier this year and coincides with International Men's Day on Thursday 19 November and Movember, a global charity that raises awareness of men's health.

It is part of the council's Move service, which creates opportunities for people to be active, build confidence and wellbeing, and connect with others.

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

"The 'he thrives' campaign aims to highlight the positive impact physical activity can have on physical, mental and social wellbeing.

"By sharing the stories of people like Sean and providing opportunities for men to get together and try out new activities, we can support more men to make movement a part of their daily lives.

"With such a varied range of activities on offer this year, there really is something for everyone and I would encourage men of all ages and fitness levels to get involved."

Alongside the free taster sessions, other activities and offers taking place in council leisure centres in November include:

Free seven-day passes, giving people the chance to try out leisure centre facilities before committing to membership.

Dads and Kids sessions offering fathers and their children the chance to have fun and be active together. Activities will vary by centre and include circuit training, bowling, soft play, gym and swimming.

Men's Health MOTs delivered in partnership with the NHS Adult Wellbeing Service

Suicide Awareness Training delivered by If U Care Share.

By Albert Nelson Online 31 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/county-durham-man-living-with-parkinsons-inspires-others-through-the-power-of-rowing**

Miss Durham GB Nicole Hanson Wins Public Choice Award at National Final



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Photo supplied by Nicole Hanson, Miss Durham GB

From the racetrack to the runway, Miss Durham GB 2026 is challenging stereotypes and showing that there is more to pageantry than meets the eye.

But what happens when you enter a competition determined to make a difference, only to discover that the outcome isn't quite what you had hoped for?

For Nicole Hanson, the answer is simple: you keep showing up, stay true to yourself and realise that winning isn't always about coming first.

At the Miss Great Britain final, Nicole drove away with the Public Choice Award, voted for by the public online, and secured a place in the Top 16 for Talent, showcasing her love of motorsport through her Abarth and her experience at Prescott Hill Climb.

Although she didn't secure an overall placement, Nicole's journey was about something bigger than a crown. Living with hypermobility, she faced the physical challenges of long rehearsals and walking in heels, pushing through sore joints while refusing to let her condition stop her from taking part.

But Nicole also had another mission: changing public perception of what a pageant girl can be.

She's a car girl, a motorsport enthusiast and an administrator within the North East Abarth community. Through her involvement in the automotive world and the creation of the Abarth Track Sisterhood, she's helping bring women together in a traditionally male-dominated space.

By Barbara Parker Online 22 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/miss-durham-gb-nicole-hanson-wins-public-choice-award-at-national-final**

County Durham and Darlington NHS Service Receives More Than 2,000 Referrals



7

A specialist service supporting women and birthing people with pelvic health during pregnancy and after birth is celebrating its first anniversary, after receiving more than 2,000 referrals in its first year.

The Perinatal Pelvic Health Service at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust provides personalised advice, assessment and treatment for women and birthing people from the start of pregnancy until one year after giving birth.

The service was launched in September 2025 with support from NHS England funding and in partnership with the Local Maternity and Neonatal System.

Andrea Longden, Lead Midwife for Perinatal Pelvic Health and Clinical Education at CDDFT, said:

“It has been fantastic to see how much the service has grown over the past year. More than 2,000 people have been referred to our specialist team, showing the real need for accessible pelvic health support during pregnancy and after birth.

“We are incredibly proud of what the team has achieved. Alongside providing individual support and treatment, we have worked closely with maternity colleagues to raise awareness, share knowledge and strengthen pelvic health care across our services. It is wonderful to know that women and birthing people are getting the help they need to feel more confident, recover well and improve their quality of life.”

By Barbara Parker Online 8 October 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/county-durham-and-darlington-nhs-service-receives-more-than-2000-referrals**

DURHAM

Bishop Auckland Celebrates Volunteers at Greener Together Awards



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Photo supplied by Hawkey PR for Bishop Auckland Town Council

Bishop Auckland celebrated the people and partnerships behind its environmental success at the first Greener Together Celebration Awards, organised by the Town Council to recognise the volunteers, community groups, schools and organisations helping to make the town greener, cleaner and more sustainable.

The celebration brought together those whose dedication and hard work contributed to Bishop Auckland achieving Gold and being named the “best in class” in the Larger Towns category at the recent Northumbria in Bloom awards: a significant achievement for the town and a testament to the strength of its community partnerships.

By Yvonne Hawkey Online 29 October 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/bishop-auckland-celebrates-volunteers-at-greener-together-awards**

DURHAM

County Durham Creatives Awarded £78k in Funding for New Community Arts Projects



8

Twenty creative practitioners across County Durham have been awarded commissions to deliver a fresh wave of arts and cultural projects to local communities.

Selected for the 2026/27 Cultivate Commissions, a joint initiative between Into the Light and North Heartlands, the successful cohort will share £78,000 in funding.

The 20 new commissions, which span a variety of work from theatre and ceramics to music, dance and visual arts, are worth almost £4,000 each.

Into the Light programme director, Julia Handelman-Smith, said:

Online 23 October 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/county-durham-creatives-awarded-78k-in-funding-for-new-community-arts-projects**

DURHAM

New Hub Offers Support for Children and Young People in County Durham



9

A new hub bringing together services for children and young people has opened in Newton Aycliffe, making it easier for them to find support.

Next Chapter is Durham County Council's new Young Futures Hub and forms part of a government programme being rolled out in pilot areas across the country.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport awarded £2 million to these areas to help develop the facilities, with a further £4m coming from the Local Youth Transformation Fund to help deliver youth services.

Based in the town's leisure centre, the hub will help young people find opportunities in their local community, and access support more easily.

By Barbara Parker Online 13 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/new-hub-offers-support-for-children-and-young-people-in-county-durham**

DURHAM

Antiques Roadshow Expert Mark Smith Coming to Bishop Auckland



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A popular Antiques Roadshow star will bring their expertise to County Durham this autumn.

Durham County Council will welcome renowned medals and militaria specialist Mark Smith to Bishop Auckland Town Hall.

Considered one of Antiques Roadshow's most popular experts, Mark will present For Valour: The Story of the Victoria Cross.

Audiences will get the chance to delve into the origins of this prestigious award, dispel myths, and hear extraordinary stories of the brave men who have received Britain's highest military honour.

By Barbara Parker Online 5 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/antiques-roadshow-expert-mark-smith-coming-to-bishop-auckland**

In brief



Photo supplied by Durham County Council, Employability Durham

DURHAM

Free Employment Support Offered to County Durham Workers Following Clayton Glass Closure

County Durham residents affected by the recent closure of Annfield Plain-based manufacturer Clayton Glass are being urged to access free support from Durham County Council's Employability Durham team.

By Zoe Walker Online 30 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/free-employment-support-offered-to-county-durham-workers-following-clayton-glass-closure**



DURHAM

Spennymoor Businesses Given Direct Voice in Town Regeneration with New Working Group

A dedicated working group has been established by the board driving regeneration and investment across a County Durham town.

By Zoe Online 16 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/spennymoor-businesses-given-direct-voice-in-town-regeneration-with-new-working-group**



DURHAM

County Durham Primary School Celebrates Positive Ofsted Report

A County Durham primary school at the heart of its local community is celebrating after receiving a highly positive Ofsted report.

Government inspectors found that Hartside Primary Academy in Crook demonstrated strong standards in Early Years provision, inclusion, and personal development and wellbeing.

Online 12 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/county-durham-primary-school-celebrates-positive-ofsted-report**



DURHAM

Smash-Hit Family Show Seen by 115,000 Worldwide Heads to Durham for Half-Term Fun

A little monster and his friends are heading to Durham for a fun, family adventure.

By Barbara Parker Online 15 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/smash-hit-family-show-seen-by-115000-worldwide-heads-to-durham-for-half-term-fun**

In brief



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DURHAM

Dean Midas Releases New Horror Short Filmed in Durham

Award-winning North East filmmaker Dean Midas has announced the official release of his latest short horror film, The Stitcher, which will be available this weekend on YouTube and Facebook.

Online 4 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/dean-midas-releases-new-horror-short-filmed-in-durham**



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DURHAM

Seaham Schoolchildren Bring Town's History to Life in New Heritage Booklet

A new heritage booklet created by local schoolchildren to celebrate Seaham's rich history is set to launch as part of a £1.6 million regeneration project nearing completion in the County Durham town.

By Zoe Walker Online 26 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/seaham-schoolchildren-bring-towns-history-to-life-in-new-heritage-booklet**



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DURHAM

£20 Million Upgrade Begins at Bishop Auckland Sewage Treatment Works

Work has begun on a £20 million upgrade to Bishop Auckland Sewage Treatment Works, marking another major milestone in a wider investment programme worth more than £100 million to protect and improve the River Wear in south-west County Durham.

By Barbara Parker Online 25 October 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/20-million-upgrade-begins-at-bishop-auckland-sewage-treatment-works**



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NEWCASTLE

Restart a Heart Day Highlights Importance of CPR Training Across the North East

More than 200 Newcastle College students are learning life-saving CPR skills as part of Restart a Heart Day, while the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) reunites with a woman whose life was saved by CPR after she suffered a cardiac arrest at work.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 20 October 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/restart-a-heart-day-highlights-importance-of-cpr-training-across-the-north-east**

In brief



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Photo: Steve Brock Photography

NEWCASTLE

Nick Atkinson Appointed Chair of the Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne

Nick Atkinson has stepped into the role of Chair of the Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne, pledging to uphold the organisation's rich heritage while driving new opportunities for engagement, participation, and growth.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 14 October 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/nick-atkinson-appointed-chair-of-the-freemen-of-newcastle-upon-tyne**



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NEWCASTLE

Newcastle Chef Scott John-Hodgson Named Runner-Up in National Chef of the Year 2026

Scott John-Hodgson, Executive Chef at Newcastle's Michelin-starred Solstice and House of Tides, has been named runner-up in the prestigious National Chef of the Year 2026 competition.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 9 October 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/newcastle-chef-scott-john-hodgson-named-runner-up-in-national-chef-of-the-year-2026**



12

NEWCASTLE

Peter Rabbit™ Art Trail Raises Record £300,000 for St Oswald's Hospice

A free public art trail featuring Peter Rabbit™ has raised a record-breaking £300,000 for a North East hospice following an exciting auction on 13 October.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 19 October 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/peter-rabbit-art-trail-raises-record-300000-for-st-oswalds-hospice**



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Photo: Middleton Hall

DARLINGTON

Singing Sessions Hit the Right Note at Darlington Retirement Village

Singing sessions led by a professional singer are helping residents of a Darlington retirement village develop their voices, stay active and enjoy music together.

By Lisa Pettifer Online 15 October 2026
Continued at **darlingtonmagazine.com/singing-sessions-hit-the-right-note-at-darlington-retirement-village**

In brief



NEWCASTLE

Newcastle Cathedral Organ Powers New Recording of The Blaydon Races

Newcastle Cathedral's historic organ features in a new recording of Geordie football anthem 'The Blaydon Races', released this month by Newcastle United to celebrate the region's musical heritage and bring its much-loved song to a new generation.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 22 October 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/newcastle-cathedral-organ-powers-new-recording-of-the-blaydon-races**



CONSETT

Ground broken in Consett for new hospital

Land remediation began on Monday 7 September, after the Trust completed its final contractual arrangements with the developer.

Work has started on the site of the new Shotley Bridge Hospital in Consett. Preparing the ground for construction is expected to take up to twelve months.

By Consett Magazine Online 1 October 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/ground-broken-in-consett-for-new-shotley-bridge-hospital**



Photo: Mark Wilkinson, Communities in Focus

CONSETT

More than 300 blankets, and an angel on every one

Born in Palestine, raised in South Africa and settled in Lanchester, Pat Christie is 86 and still making things for other people.

By Consett Magazine Online 5 October 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/pat-christie-lanchester-300-blankets**



SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Little Libraries Scheme Continues with Coastal Book Hunt

Visitors to Sunderland's coastline will be able to enjoy the next chapter of a scheme encouraging people to read this October.

By Zoe Walker Online 8 October 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-little-libraries-scheme-continues-with-coastal-book-hunt**

In brief



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HARTLEPOOL

Hartlepool United Partners with NHS Trust to Offer Free CPR Training and Match Tickets

Hartlepool United Football Club and University Hospitals Tees have partnered this Restart a Heart Day to boost local confidence in performing life-saving CPR.

By Barbara Parker Online 17 October 2026
Continued at **hartlepoolmagazine.co.uk/hartlepool-united-partners-with-nhs-trust-to-offer-free-cpr-training-and-match-tickets**

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