NEWCASTLE 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: Maritime Volunteer Service to Host Newcastle Quayside Open Day, page 8. Photo: Pawel Gajek, The Bigger Picture Agency.

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

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Your story here



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NEWCASTLE

Msb Mario 'El Niño de la Pili' Brings a New Kind of Live Experience to Newcastle

Msb Mario "El Niño de la Pili", Spain's fastest-rising spoken word artist, brings his powerful fusion of poetry, live music and Mediterranean intensity to The Cluny on 4 June for an exclusive show

There are artists who perform songs, and then there are artists who build atmospheres. On 4 June, Newcastle will witness the arrival of one of Spain's most intriguing underground cultural exports when The Cluny hosts Msb Mario, better known as "El Niño de la Pili", for an exclusive one-night performance that already feels destined to become one of the city's most talked-about intimate live events of the summer.

In an era dominated by algorithms, rehearsed social-media personas and disposable music trends, Mario arrives from Spain carrying something increasingly rare: artistic unpredictability. His work exists somewhere between spoken word, flamenco-rooted emotion, live music performance and raw theatrical instinct. It is not simply a concert. It is closer to a collision between poetry, confession and rhythm.

That is precisely why his upcoming Newcastle

appearance matters.

Across Europe's alternative cultural circuits, audiences have started gravitating towards experiences that feel human again: intimate, imperfect and emotionally immediate. Mario's performances lean directly into that space. His shows move fluidly between English and Spanish, weaving together flamenco textures, urban pulse, rock attitude and stripped-back storytelling with a sense of spontaneity that refuses to conform to traditional genre labels.

The setting could hardly be more fitting. The Cluny has long held a reputation as one of the North East's defining independent venues, a room where authenticity still carries currency. Artists who step onto its stage are expected to bring more than spectacle; they are expected to bring substance. Over the years, the venue has become synonymous with left-field music, boundary-pushing performance and genuine artistic discovery.

Msb Mario fits naturally into that lineage.

What separates "El Niño de la Pili" from the growing wave of internationally touring performers is his refusal to dilute identity. There is no attempt to smooth away the cultural edges of his work for mainstream comfort. Instead, he amplifies them. Spanish cadence, street poetry, southern European intensity and contemporary spoken word all coexist within performances that feel deeply personal yet universally readable.

And while his artistic language is rooted in Spain, the emotional architecture of the show is unmistakably international. Loneliness, movement, memory, sexual ambiguity, desire, exile, nightlife and tenderness: these themes travel easily across borders. Audiences do not need to speak fluent Spanish to understand what Mario is doing on stage. The physicality of the performance communicates as much as the words themselves.

This matters particularly now, as Newcastle's cultural landscape continues evolving into one of the UK's most exciting creative ecosystems. The North East's artistic identity has increasingly embraced international voices, experimental formats and multidisciplinary performance. Recent years have seen growing recognition of the region as a rising cultural force beyond London's orbit.

Mario's arrival taps directly into that momentum.

There is also something refreshing about an artist who still believes in live performance as a genuinely shared experience rather than content production for phones. Reports surrounding the show describe performances shaped by instinct and audience interaction, with no two nights unfolding in exactly the same way. That sense of risk (of allowing atmosphere to dictate direction) is becoming increasingly uncommon in modern touring culture.

For Newcastle audiences accustomed to safe formulas and predictable stagecraft, "El Niño de la Pili" may feel like a reminder of what live art can still be when it is allowed to breathe.

Not manufactured emotion. Real emotion.

Not performance by numbers. Presence.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 11 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/msb-mario-el-nino-de-la-pili-brings-a-new-kind-of-live-experience-to-newcastle**

Your turn

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Newcastle-Based Business Support Network Helps Hundreds Launch New Ventures



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Photo: Steve Brock Photography

Business & IP Centre North East is marking three years of significant impact across the region after helping more than 1,500 businesses access expert support and guiding hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs as they took their first steps into business.

In the last three years, BIPC North East has supported over 1,500 businesses through tailored, non-financial advice, connecting them with a wide network of experts across areas such as marketing, PR, sustainability, finance and intellectual property. Alongside this, more than 700 aspiring entrepreneurs have been supported through workshops, one-to-one sessions and confidence-building programmes designed to help turn ideas into reality with the support of partners: The Millin Charity and Reviving The Heart of the West End.

Eligible businesses are also able to access up to 12 hours of fully funded, specialist support through the Citylife Business Support Grant, enabling them to work directly with experts to accelerate growth, refine strategy and respond to an ever-changing business landscape. Around 700 businesses have benefited from grant-backed programmes, helping to drive innovation, create jobs and strengthen the regional economy.

At the heart of this success is a people-first approach; something Economic Development Officer Sarah Turnbull says defines the BIPC's work.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 18 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/newcastle-based-business-support-network-helps-hundreds-launch-new-ventures**

Byker Youth Centre Celebrates National Recognition with Parliament Visit



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Young people from The Lighthouse Project Youth Centre travelled to Parliament to celebrate the positive impact of the Youth Investment Fund and speak directly with ministers and MPs about the importance of youth voice and continued investment in young people.

Members of the Byker-based youth centre joined Stephanie Peacock and Alex McIntyre in Parliament to highlight how the Youth Investment Fund has supported and influenced their lives.

The Lighthouse Project is one of 276 youth centres funded by the UK Government's £300M+ Youth Investment Fund. The Lighthouse Project, a youth organisation, received a Youth Investment Fund grant to transform a derelict church building and garden outbuilding. The funding created activity spaces for after-school clubs and holiday programmes, a youth space with volunteer opportunities, one-to-one counselling facilities, and a training kitchen partnering with local food services

Young people and youth workers from The Lighthouse Project were part of a group of over 30 young people aged 10-19 who gathered in Parliament with Minister Peacock and MPs to celebrate the legacy of the fund. Young people were invited by the charity Social Investment Business, who delivered the Youth Investment Fund in partnership with the UK Government.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 8 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/byker-youth-centre-celebrates-national-recognition-with-parliament-visit**

Your turn
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NEWCASTLE

Anthony Downie Creates Bespoke Painting Inspired by North Shields Fish Quay



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A North Shields artist whose bold murals and paintings have become a familiar sight across the region has been commissioned to produce a bespoke artwork celebrating one of the town's most historic waterfront landmarks.

Union Quay Dental, based inside the iconic Richard Irvin Building on North Shields Fish Quay, has unveiled the specially commissioned piece by local artist Anthony Downie as part of the practice's major refurbishment programme.

Downie, 38, who was last year selected as one of the artists for the North Shields 800 mural trail, created the piece in his signature style: vibrant North East street scenes painted in bold blue, orange and yellow tones inspired by the light and atmosphere of the region.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 18 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/anthony-downie-creates-bespoke-painting-inspired-by-north-shields-fish-quay**

NEWCASTLE

Maritime Volunteer Service to Host Newcastle Quayside Open Day



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Photo: Pawel Gajek, The Bigger Picture Agency

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.

Visitors will have the chance to meet volunteers from the MVS Northumbria Unit and find out more about the organisation's work across the region, from Berwick to Teesside. Based at St Peter's Marina, the unit regularly carries out patrols along the River Tyne.

The unit's two vessels will be moored alongside the NE1 Newcastle City Marina during the event, giving people the chance to step aboard and speak to crew members about their activities and training.

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

NEWCASTLE

Percy Hedley students bring BSL to the Tyne Tunnel for Deaf Awareness Week 2026



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TT2, the operator of the Tyne Tunnels, welcomed 10 students from Northern Counties School, part of the Percy Hedley Foundation, to its Wallsend offices for the session.

The pupils have already showcased their British Sign Language skills on a national stage, including appearances at the MOBO Awards, and even most recently performing at a school in New York.

During the visit, TT2 staff took part in an engaging session, rotating between students to learn how to sign their name, numbers and colours.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 6 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/percy-hedley-students-bring-bsl-to-the-tyne-tunnel-for-deaf-awareness-week-2026**

NEWCASTLE

Lord Mayor Henry Gallagher Praises Volunteers at Newcastle's People's Kitchen



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Photo: Steve Brock Photography

Henry Gallagher has paid tribute to the volunteers at The People's Kitchen as he prepares to step down at the end of his term as Lord Mayor.

Founded in 1985, The People's Kitchen has been one of the Lord Mayor's chosen charities throughout his year in office. The organisation provides free hot meals, practical support and companionship to vulnerable people across Newcastle upon Tyne.

Run entirely by volunteers, the charity serves around 300 meals every day of the year while offering an important sense of community and support to those most in need.

The charity relies on donations from members of the public, businesses and community organisations to continue its work.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 13 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/lord-mayor-henry-gallagher-praises-volunteers-at-newcastles-peoples-kitchen**

In brief



NEWCASTLE

Newcastle Students Take Centre Stage in Bold New Fashion and Culture Project

Shoppers in Newcastle upon Tyne will have the chance to discover the city's next wave of creative talent this year as Eldon Square launches Future Heritage, a bold new initiative celebrating local designers through fashion, culture and live experiences across the centre.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 6 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/newcastle-students-take-centre-stage-in-bold-new-fashion-and-culture-project**



NEWCASTLE

Newcastle Bus Driver Steve McCabe Retires After 27 Years with Stagecoach

Popular Walkergate driver retires after more than a quarter of a century with Stagecoach

Steve McCabe originally began his career working in IT for the Inland Revenue before becoming a bus driver in 1988

By Sara Janiszewska Online 11 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/newcastle-bus-driver-steve-mccabe-retires-after-27-years-with-stagecoach**



NEWCASTLE

Newcastle Volunteer Honoured at Buckingham Palace Garden Party

A charity volunteer from Newcastle upon Tyne who dedicated her free time to supporting local families while studying at university was honoured to attend this week's Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 14 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/newcastle-volunteer-honoured-at-buckingham-palace-garden-party**



Photo: The Bigger Picture Agency

NEWCASTLE

How One North East Family's Journey with Makaton Became a Mission to Help Others

A Ryton-based author, trainer and newly elected councillor is helping families, schools and workplaces across the North East build more inclusive environments through specialist Makaton training inspired by her daughter, Ava.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 27 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/how-one-north-east-familys-journey-with-makaton-became-a-mission-to-help-others**

In brief



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NEWCASTLE

From Classroom to Castle: Pupils Enjoy Royal Adventure at Newcastle's Historic Keep

The 30 Year 1 children from St Oswald's Catholic Primary had been studying kings and queens in History lessons, and gained some real-life insight into the topic when they visited Newcastle Castle.

By Zoe Eastman Online 27 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/from-classroom-to-castle-pupils-enjoy-royal-adventure-at-newcastles-historic-keep**



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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**



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NEWCASTLE

North East Businesses Raise Over £235,000 for Air Ambulance Charity

Great North Air Ambulance Service recently welcomed a number of charitable businesses to its North East base for a special appreciation event, recognising their outstanding support.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 3 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/north-east-businesses-raise-over-235000-for-air-ambulance-charity**



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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**

In brief



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NEWCASTLE

Foster Carers Celebrated Across the North East During Foster Care Fortnight

Foster carers across the North East are being recognised and celebrated this May as the region takes part in Foster Care Fortnight, running from 11 to 24 May.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 16 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/foster-carers-celebrated-across-the-north-east-during-foster-care-fortnight**



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NEWCASTLE

Summer of Pride 2026 Brings Music, Marches and Community Events Across the North East

This year's North East Summer of Pride will once again deliver a packed programme of entertainment, community events and celebrations, while also highlighting the importance of continuing to campaign for equality and inclusion.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 22 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/summer-of-pride-2026-brings-music-marches-and-community-events-across-the-north-east**



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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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Photo: Peter Haygarth

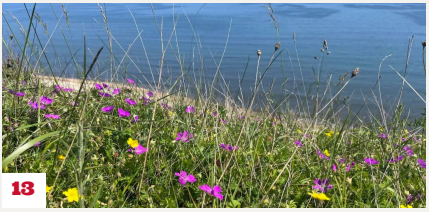
DURHAM

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**

In brief



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**



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**



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**



Photo: Mark Wilkinson, Communities in Focus

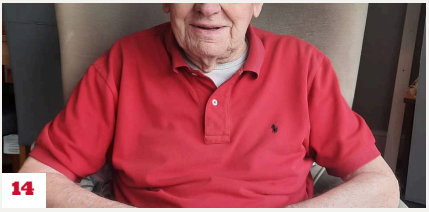
CONSETT

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.

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

In brief



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CONSETT

Consett Rallies Around George Stafford's 100th Birthday Charity Walk

A much-loved Consett man is preparing to celebrate his 100th birthday by taking on a sponsored 1.5-mile walk in aid of St Cuthbert's Hospice, with support pouring in from across the local community.

By Consett Magazine Online 27 May 2026
Continued at **consettmagazine.com/consett-rallies-around-george-staffords-100th-birthday-charity-walk**



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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.

By Zoe Online 6 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/rare-first-world-war-ledger-returns-to-county-durham-archive**



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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**

Your turn

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