

Newton News

• COMMUNITY • BUSINESS • SCHOOLS • EVENTS • SPORTS • COUNTY NEWS • LETTERS •

This months photo is a summer sunset along Stephenson Way provided by Jenna Coates.

We are looking for great local photographs to feature on the cover of Newton News each month. Show us what makes our town special - landmarks, people, places, events, wildlife or beautiful seasonal scenes.

For the best chance of image being featured:

- Portrait format;
- High-resolution JPG or PNG;
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BUSINESS



COUNTY



COMMUNITY



EVENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

COMMUNITY
BUSINESS
SCHOOLS
EVENTS
SPORTS
RELIGION
COUNTY

Leeds University Students Save the Day for AFWC!

Aycliffe Fell Walking Club's (AFWC) recent outing took us into the Lake District area of Rydal to Coniston. As ever, there was a choice of walks from lowland ambles to high peaks challenges with the bulk of the walkers choosing the lower level walks due to the overcast weather conditions.



My group walked from Rydal Hall on the A591 and pretty soon found ourselves going uphill around Loughrigg Fell and fighting our way through heavy bracken and indistinct paths. The rain eased off considerably even before 11am, but it was still very damp underfoot and as we descended down towards Skelwith Bridge we encountered fast flowing and swollen rivers. A few of us stopped at Chesters, Skelwith Bridge, for a very well deserved cuppa and cake. The blackcurrant and ginger cake was exceptional!

We moved on to eventually pick up a path which took us towards Colwith before returning south to cross the A593 and head over to Tarn Hows where we found a lovely spot with a few benches on which to have some lunch. There we met up with other walkers and joined them for the final stretch down to Coniston. Despite the adverse forecast, the rain stayed away for much of the day or at least until we arrived in Coniston. We enjoyed the usual trappings of the village's pubs and fish & chips shop and headed back on the coach for the journey home.

After an innocent fall, in an enormous quarried cave near Hodge Close, one lady ended up needing medical attention. There was no mobile signal in the area so she was helped to a nearby cottage for assistance. Six students from Leeds University were staying there and they were really helpful. They even drove her to Kendal Hospital (an hour away) with a suspected broken wrist. We are all incredibly grateful for the kindness those students showed to her. She received further attention in Darlington.

Our next walk is on 10th October and involves walks from the Kirkstone Pass and Windermere to Staveley.

Aycliffe Fell Walking Club is a very friendly walking club. Please look at the website aycliffefellwalkingclub.com for further details or if you are interested in joining us. Annual membership of £10 runs from January to December with each walk outing costing £15 to cover the cost of the coach. Feel free to join us on the next walk. We look forward to your interest.

Together with Diabetes – Support For All

Come and join us Tuesday 13th October at Simpasture Community Lounge, Simpasture Court, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 5JZ from 1pm-3pm. Shared experiences, practical tips, encouragement, family friendly atmosphere, **EVERYONE WELCOME** (adults and children) – no pressure to talk, just come and listen... don't feel alone! If type 1 or type 2 diabetes is in your life – this group is for you! We meet every fortnight! Meeting dates: Tues 27th Oct, Tues 10th and 24th Nov (guest speakers - diabetes nurses attending this session) and Tues 8th Dec. Contact Kayleigh 07950 885454 for more info.

Clean Up After Your Dog

Dear Sir

When I moved to Woodham, one of the things I looked forward to was walking around the woods and pathways around the area. It truly should be a pleasure to wander through these areas enjoying the break from traffic and other distractions.

Instead it has become a game of 'dodge the poo'. Every few metres there is always piles of the stuff on the footpaths.

During summer it's fairly easy to avoid the piles, but during autumn it becomes hard to spot the piles due to the leaves falling from the trees.

I personally have nothing against people walking their dogs, you have every right to do so. But, why can't you pick up your dog's poo and take it home to dispose of?

Do you not care if someone walks through it, or a child falls on it?

Do you not care if a child contracts Toxocariasis from contact with the poo? This is immensely serious as it can lead to blindness.

How would you feel having that on your conscience?

Perhaps you think you are a responsible dog owner and do pick up the mess. However, do you see what your dog is doing when it's off the lead and wandering around behind you?

Do you pick up the mess then throw the full poo bag onto the path or hang it on a tree branch, like a Xmas decoration?

Additionally, when your dog runs up to a passer-by, do you say 'don't worry, he won't hurt you'? Well no-one really knows what their darling pet is capable of and many a person has, at worst, been maimed or killed by a family pet who 'won't hurt you' and, at best, had muddy dogs paws all over their clean clothes when it jumps up to 'play'.

I really don't want a dog trying to lick my face when it jumps up at me, we all know where a dog licks itself and I do not want that in my face, even if you don't mind, because I do!

Dog walkers, please consider the other people walking the paths when you take your family pet out for a walk. Please watch where your dog is at all times, keep it under control, clean up after it and dispose responsibly of the poo.

I know most people are considerate, but there are some who think that they, themselves and their dogs, have the right to do what they want, where they want, with no regard for others safety and hygiene.

Well, I am sorry, but you don't, the paths and woods are for us all to enjoy, so don't be a numpty, and clean up properly please.

Name and address supplied.

Pioneering Care Centre Community Garden Secures Second Place



Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) is delighted to share that it has been awarded second place in the Great Aycliffe Town Council Best Community Garden Awards 2026.

This achievement is a testament to the dedication, hard work and community spirit that has gone into developing and maintaining the Community Garden at the Pioneering Care Centre (PCC) in Newton Aycliffe.

Graham Barker, Centre Enterprise Development Manager, said: "The Garden is a welcoming and vibrant space for local people to enjoy,

and this recognition reflects the care and commitment invested in helping it flourish. "PCP would like to extend its sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the garden's success, including volunteers, staff, and members of the local community.

"Their support and enthusiasm have helped create a beautiful outdoor environment that can be enjoyed by all. "Although we may not have achieved first place this time around, we are incredibly proud to have been recognised among so many fantastic garden spaces."

To find out more about the Pioneering Care Centre and its Community Garden, visit www.pcp.uk.net

In Response to: 75 Years in Newton Aycliffe

My family moved to Newton Aycliffe late 1952/ early 53 when I was a few months old. Together with my elder brothers, Michael and Brian, and sister Marjorie, we lived at 5 Shafto Way, now demolished.

I too started school at 'The Flats' and then went to Sugar Hill. I have a class photo taken when we must have been 5/6+, all sitting with our teacher on tiny school chairs.

I remember going to film shows at the Beveridge Hall, including the time when the Brooke Bond Tea chimps appeared!

My Dad also worked at ENV/Eatons for about 20 years, as an engineer. My Mum had various jobs in those early years, some at Neville Parade shops and also serving petrol at the garages on the A167, Aycliffe Village.

Obviously, I still live here, I do remember your name and some of the others you mention. Newton Aycliffe may not be perfect, where is, but we had a happy childhood, as did my children too.

Roger Pounder.

K. McGuinness MCians
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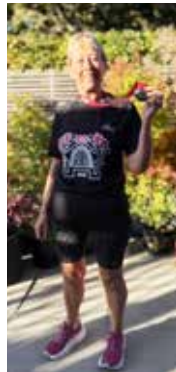
Newton Aycliffe W.I.

During the month of September, we have enjoyed trips to The History Wardrobe, featuring the fashion revolution, which was very interesting and, in part, quite amusing, there has been a trip to Saltburn taking advantage of the local train journey. The Saltburn tram is now in working order and the Sea View Restaurant served excellent fish and chips. Also in September, one of our members



completed the Great North Run, raising additional funds from our WI for Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group.

For our October Tuesday evening meeting, we will be celebrating our group's birthday with tasty treats, games, bingo and quizzes. Our WI members also have the opportunity to join in all the events arranged at WI house, including cupcake decorating for Halloween on 29th of October and there are monthly meet ups including a Crochet Group on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and Saturday Stitchers on the 2nd Saturday of the month. We are now making our plans for celebrating the countdown to Christmas, including visiting local Christmas markets and Christmas lunch. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Methodist Church at Neville Parade. We have speakers on various topics, craft evenings, auctions and parties. There is no need to be lonely as a WI member. Come and join our friendly and hospitable Newton Aycliffe WI. All women are welcome and you will have the opportunity to attend trips, learn new crafts and make new friends. If you have any questions or queries please contact our President Christine Robinson on 07981 992686.



Aycliffe Village W.I.

Trip to Hexham and Corbridge

In September, members and friends had a day out to Hexham and Corbridge. We visited Hexham Abbey, the farmer's market and craft fair. In Corbridge, shopping and afternoon tea went down extremely well.



The WI 111th Anniversary Celebrations

We held an afternoon craft session to celebrate 111 years of the WI. Dressed in purple, and colours of the WI, we painted memory stones with uplifting messages to be shared in places around the village, with tea and cake of course!



Our Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21st October at 7pm, when Alison Grange from Hopetown will talk about Women and the Railways. Visitors are most welcome to join us.

For more information about Aycliffe Village WI, our trips, events and visits, email aycliffevillage@durhamwi.co.uk

Coffee n Chat

Our next Coffee n Chat will be on Wednesday 14th October between 2.00pm and 3.00pm at Aycliffe Village Hall. Everyone is welcome to come along for a drink and a chat in a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere. You don't have to be a member of the WI and we look forward to seeing new faces.

Other Events

Aycliffe Village WI continues to visit St Clare's Court care home for crafting sessions with the residents. We collect food and other items for St Clare's Church food bank and a local Women's Refuge. We are holding an evening with our ACLE group to pass on basic skills, like knitting, ironing and sewing.

Newton News

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Member of Parliament Update

Email: alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk | Telephone: 01325 344185

I really was pleased to join University Technical College South Durham in Newton Aycliffe for their 10th anniversary celebrations.

The UTC does incredible work providing high-quality technical education to hundreds of young people, helping them develop the skills and experience they need to progress into further education, apprenticeships and careers. It was great to join former Education Secretary Lord Baker, whose vision helped create the college, alongside current and former students to celebrate this anniversary. I'm always proud to support their work.

I really enjoyed meeting the Options group again at the Pioneering Care Centre in Newton Aycliffe. Options is a fun and engaging group for adults with learning and physical difficulties, led by the members themselves. It was great to see everyone thriving and taking part in an interesting range of activities.

I also caught up with Carol, the dynamic chief executive of the Pioneering Care Partnership, to hear about the brilliant work they are doing across the region to improve health and wellbeing. The PCP have a really good range of facilities, including a walking group, hydrotherapy pool and community café. Please drop in the centre and support their work. It was great to go back to Woodham Burn Primary School to talk to all of the pupils in assembly about Parliament and my work as our MP. I also met with the school council to hear their brilliant ideas for our area and answer their questions.

Thank you to the volunteers at Neville Community Centre who host a popular coffee morning every week. I really enjoyed popping in to chat to local residents and thoroughly recommend the bacon sandwiches! While I was there, I picked up a number of local issues and was pleased to help residents with a number of individual matters.

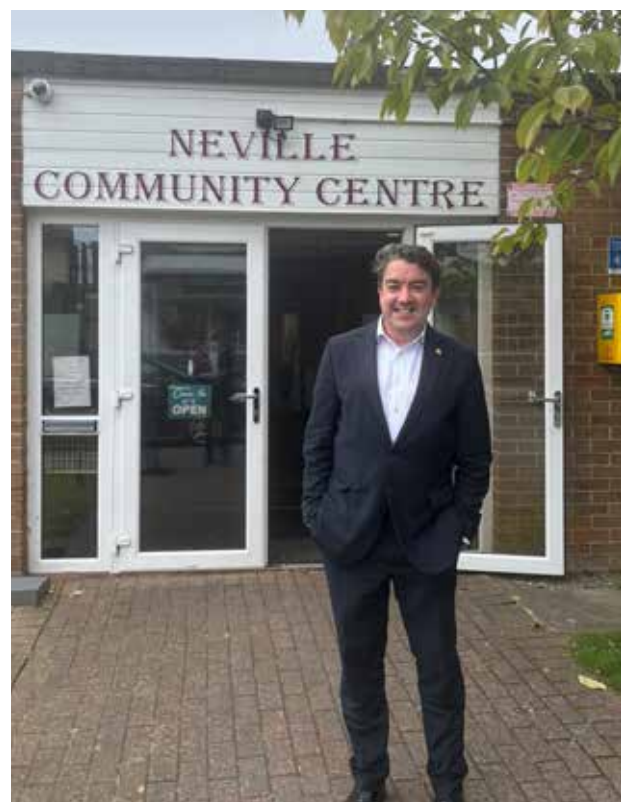
Alongside this work in our communities, I have also been dealing with important issues in Parliament. I voted against the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill because I did not believe the safeguards were strong enough to provide the necessary protections for vulnerable people.

I had previously voted against the legislation for the same reason, following the concerns that had been raised with me by constituents, medical professionals and organisations working in the hospice and palliative care sector. When the same Bill was put forward again, those concerns remained and I therefore



voted against it again.

I understand this is a sensitive topic, with strongly held views on both sides. I want to thank everyone who contacted me and took the time to share their views. Please look out online for details of my regular coffee mornings and MP advice surgeries across our constituency. You can also sign up to my email newsletter. If I can help you or your family with an issue, please get in touch.



Trust in Policing is Earned - One Investigation at a Time

Would you report a crime if you thought nothing would come of it?

It is a simple question, but it is at the heart of public confidence in policing.

When people report crime, they expect to be listened to, taken seriously and kept informed. They expect their crime to be properly investigated, reasonable lines of enquiry pursued and, wherever possible, offenders brought to justice.

That is why the newly published State of Policing 2025–26 report matters. His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary warns that, nationally, too many victims are not receiving the quality of investigation or service they should expect. More starkly, forces must make urgent improvements to how they investigate crime and secure justice for victims.

We should not be defensive about that challenge. We should respond to it. My Police, Crime and Justice Plan and the Chief Constable's Plan make clear commitments to people across County Durham and Darlington: to deliver a first-class service to victims.

Those commitments must be judged by people's actual experiences. Was your call handled properly? Was your vulnerability recognised? Was your crime investigated thoroughly? Were you kept updated? Did you understand what happened and why?

Not every crime can be solved. But every victim deserves confidence that their crime mattered and everything reasonable was done to investigate it.

Right now, residents have a real opportunity to tell policing what they think because a national survey on trust and confidence in policing is asking people about their experiences of policing, crime and anti-social behaviour and what makes them feel more or less confident in the police.

So, I want residents and businesses across County Durham and Darlington to take part and share whether your experience has been positive, or whether you believe policing needs to do better. You can access the survey through Keep in the Know, using the survey link National Public Confidence in Policing Survey or by simply scanning the QR code in the graphic here.

We cannot improve confidence

without understanding what people experience. And there is little point asking the public to speak up unless we are prepared to listen and act.

As Police and Crime Commissioner, I do not direct individual investigations. Operational responsibility rightly rests with the Chief Constable. But I do have the power and responsibility to hold the Chief Constable to account for the effectiveness of policing and the service victims and communities receive. I will use HMICFRS inspection findings, performance data and, importantly, what residents tell me to challenge performance and drive improvement.

Accountability does not stop with policing. HMICFRS rightly says reform must extend across the CPS, courts, prisons and probation. As Chair of our Local Criminal Justice Board, I will challenge those partners too. Victims do not experience separate organisations; they experience one journey through justice. The State of Policing gives us the national challenge. My responsibility is using the findings to inform local scrutiny, accountability, and action.

Trust cannot be demanded or taken for granted. It is earned through what happens when people need the police most, one victim listened to, one crime properly investigated and one offender brought to justice at a time, helping to make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Fund to France



We are asking for help with our fundraiser. Liam and Ella have been selected to take part in their first international pairs event. This will be held in Dinan, France. It's very exciting as GBSA, Great Britain Skate Artistic, have not sent any pairs to compete in recent years. We are so proud and happy they have this opportunity. Liam is 12 and Ella 14 and to be selected for international is a huge achievement. In total we estimate the two athletes and two coaches would need around £2531 to cover essential costs, without food or any other expenses. We have created a go fund me page to try to raise £1000 to get started: <https://gofund.me/a98ef6471> We are looking for any other ideas, donations or support. Any raffle prizes or fundraising ideas would also be helpful. We got confirmation they are attending and the competition will be held 28th October - 1st November. Any help is most gratefully received. Tracy Stevens Spectrum.

JOY ALLEN
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S.A.C.A. School Aycliffe Community Association

Our Community Hall - is located at the bottom of Eastfields, School Aycliffe DL5 6QH (please follow the white/brown information signs).

Ladies Night – held every 1st Wednesday in the month, £3 per person, including light refreshments.

Our next session will be on Wednesday, 7th October, 7.00pm to 9.00pm. Good skincare and Lesions – Marji Todd, Tyne Medical Clinic (sponsored by L'oreal). Please contact Christine for further info on 07981 992686.

Reading Club/Group

Our next session will be held towards the end of October, 7.30pm til 9.00pm. The cost is £5 per person which includes light refreshments and payment towards the room hire. We try to meet every four to six weeks. A massive welcome to our newest members!

Books can be purchased at a discounted rate via the group or by audio/Kindle, if that's your preferred choice, and also loaned from the library. Please contact Georgette on 07951 758118 or email me on georgetterouse236@hotmail.com

Looking forward to seeing you - happy reading and looking forward to receiving your feedback on the books that you're reading!
Georgette & Paula.

Dates for Your Diary – Save these dates!

Bonfire Night Celebration

Thursday 5th November starting at 6.15pm.

Tickets are £4 each which includes homemade soup and a hot-dog – for tickets and further information please contact Zanna on 07929 916725.

Annual Christmas Quiz

Friday 11th December - timings to be confirmed, please save the date for this very popular fund-raiser.

The format has changed slightly and we WILL NOT be providing food – only nibbles, so please bring your own food and drink.

Tickets will cost £5 per person, with a maximum of 6 team members. Further details to follow.

Mobile Van Food Schedule

Huntley's Fish & Chips – serving times 4.30pm to until 7.00pm or sold out! 30th October, 10th November, 24th November & 22nd December.

Weird Dough – serving times - tbc or sold out!

Please look at our Facebook page for further/up to date information.

Are you thinking of having a party, social gathering, run a class (we are looking for individuals who would like to use our premises on a regular basis) or just want to use our hall on a one off basis? Arrange a visit and have a look.

We have a large hall, small meeting room, off-road parking, including accessible toilets (baby changing facilities), enclosed garden/play area and a large kitchen with a serving hatch.

Please contact Zanna Bewick for further details on 07929 916725.

New committee members are always welcome – make your voice count in your local community!

Contact Christine Robinson on 07981 992686 for an informal chat.

Further copies of the Newton News are available from our Hall.

Thank you for all your support to date.

S.A.C.A. Committee Members.

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Around Town Aycliffe Radio

29th September

September's Around Town brought together a great mix of community based talent and expertise. From business and local politics we had Paul Howell, and local business woman, turned Town Councillor, Sharon Hutchinson. Local charity organisations were well represented by Sam and Hayley from award winning LittleSENdsations, and Chris Morgan from the very successful Veterans Community Hub.

Rounding off the guest list, from the entertainment world we had the team from Cute Fox Promotions, promoters and presenters of the very successful Oakleaf Sports Complex Cliffecon events, Hopetown, as well as numerous Cosplay events throughout the region.

Around Town Aycliffe Radio
Phill Hawkins.



Coffee Morning Raises £156 for Cancer Support

Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) is delighted to announce that £156 was raised through its recent Macmillan Coffee Morning.

The event brought together staff, service users, families and members of the local community to enjoy refreshments while raising funds for a worthwhile cause.

Ann Bell, Community Development Support Officer, said: "We would like to thank everyone who donated, baked, attended and supported the event.

"The money collected will help continue providing vital services for people living with cancer and their families."

Find out more about exciting events at the Pioneering Care Centre by downloading a what's on guide at www.pcp.uk.net/pioneering-care-centre



Recognised at Hair & Beauty Awards

A Newton Aycliffe spray tan business is celebrating another achievement after being awarded Highly Commended – Spray Tan Expert of the Year 2026 at the North East Hair & Beauty Awards.

Katie Greenwood, owner of Tan On Demand, attended the awards at Rainton Arena on Saturday 19th September, where she was recognised alongside beauty professionals from across the North East. Tan On Demand began more than eight years ago as a small side hustle alongside Katie's full time career. Starting with mobile appointments, the business has since grown into a dedicated spray tanning studio from Katie's home in Newton Aycliffe.

Katie said: "It means so much to have the business recognised again. When I started Tan On Demand, I never imagined it would grow into what it is today.

"I'm incredibly proud to be a small independent business based in Newton Aycliffe, and so grateful to every client who has supported me along the way." The business has previously received regional and national recognition, including Best Salon for Tanning at the Salon Awards 2022 and second place nationally for Spray Tan Artist of the Year in 2025.

Katie plans to continue growing Tan On Demand within Newton Aycliffe, with the latest award marking another milestone in the business's journey.



email:

paul@newtonnews.co.uk

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!



A Walk in the Park Raises £831.62 for Together 21

Together 21, delivered by health and wellbeing charity Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP), has raised an incredible £831.62p for children with Down syndrome and their families.

Families, children, young people and supporters completed an annual sponsored walk in Preston Park, Stockton, demonstrating their determination and community spirit while raising vital funds for Together 21.

The money raised will help Together 21 continue providing support, activities and opportunities for children and young people with Down syndrome and their families. The service offers a welcoming environment where families can build friendships, develop skills, boost confidence and celebrate achievements together.

Joanne Walker, Disability Services Development Officer, said: "Thank you to everybody who took the time to sponsor Together 21.

"A Walk in the Park' is held in the lead-up to Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October and gives participants the opportunity to come together and celebrate the achievements and potential of children and young people with Down syndrome.

"We would also like to thank everyone who took part, donated and supported the event. The generosity shown by the local community will help us continue making a positive difference to families across the region."

For more information about Together 21, and to show your support to the children and families the service supports, visit www.pcp.uk.net/together-21



VOLUNTEER DRIVERS URGENTLY NEEDED

Can You Help?

- A cancer diagnosis changes lives in an instant. For many patients, simply getting to hospital for chemotherapy, radiotherapy or other life-saving treatment becomes another huge worry.
- At Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group, we provide free transport to hospitals across County Durham, Darlington and the North East, but we can only continue this vital service with the help of our amazing volunteer drivers.
- Many of our patients have no family available to take them, are too unwell to drive themselves, or simply cannot afford the cost of travelling. A friendly face and a safe journey can make all the difference on what is often one of the hardest days of their lives.
- We are looking for caring, reliable people aged 25 or over with a full UK driving licence and access to a car. Whether you can spare one day a month or several days a week, every journey you make could help someone receive the treatment they desperately need.

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For more information, please contact: **Allison White: 07762 258696**

Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group
 Supporting cancer patients and their families across parts of County Durham & Darlington.

Together, we can make every journey count.

The Bondgate Players Present

2:22

A GHOST STORY

by Danny Robins

The Majestic Theatre Darlington
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 Performances start at 7:30pm

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An amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books

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Darlington Hippodrome Unveils a Packed and Entertaining 2026 Autumn Season

The wait is over! Darlington Hippodrome has launched its brand-new autumn 2026 brochure, packed with an incredible line-up of blockbuster musicals, gripping drama, family favourites, comedy, music and unforgettable live entertainment.

With something for every taste and every generation, the new season brings some of the biggest touring productions in the UK to Darlington, alongside much-loved local talent and an impressive roster of household names making special one-night-only appearances.

Leading the programme is a host of major week-long productions that are set to attract audiences from across the region.

October is packed with must-see theatre, beginning with the classic courtroom drama *Twelve Angry Men*, a gripping and powerful story that continues to captivate audiences decades after it first premiered. Later in the month, the internationally acclaimed phenomenon *SIX The Musical* takes centre stage, transforming the six wives of Henry VIII into pop princesses in one of the most successful musicals of recent years. Darlington's own award-winning amateur theatre company also returns in style, as DarlingtonOS presents the rock spectacular *We Will Rock You*, featuring the legendary music of Queen in what promises to be a dazzling community production.

November brings one of the funniest and most inventive plays of recent years, as *Pride and Prejudice* (*sort of)* arrives with its unique, irreverent and hilarious take on Jane Austen's literary classic.

The festive season wouldn't be complete without Darlington Hippodrome's renowned pantomime, and this year audiences can look forward to the magical *Beauty & The Beast* in December. Packed with laughter, dazzling costumes, spectacular effects and plenty of festive fun, it's set to be the perfect family treat.

Looking ahead into 2027, the excitement continues with a series of acclaimed productions making their way to Darlington.

In February, audiences can experience the powerful and inspiring drama *The King's Speech*, alongside the thrilling comedy mystery *The Other Side of Murder*.

April sees one of the biggest theatrical success stories of recent years arrive in town, as the Olivier Award-winning and internationally celebrated *Operation Mincemeat* takes to the stage following its phenomenal success in London's West End and beyond.

May is a standout month for theatre lovers, featuring *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the stage adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's bestselling novel, alongside the classic thriller *Strangers on a Train* and the acclaimed adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, one of the most celebrated plays of the modern era.

The run of major productions continues into **June** with theatre history in the making as *The Mousetrap* celebrates its remarkable 75th year, bringing Agatha Christie's legendary whodunnit to Darlington audiences.

Finally, in **August**, the season concludes in spectacular style with the feel-good musical favourite *Grease*, packed with iconic songs, unforgettable characters and plenty of summer-nights nostalgia. Alongside these major productions, Darlington Hippodrome will also welcome a host of famous faces for special one-night-only events throughout the season. Audiences can look forward to appearances from comedy legend Harry Enfield, acclaimed actor Sir Derek Jacobi, much-loved national treasure Miriam Margolyes, comedian Chris Ramsey, singer and stage star Gareth Gates, stand-up favourite Omid Djalili, award-winning performer Matt Terry, comedian Seann Walsh, dance superstar Giovanni Pernice, pub landlord extraordinaire Al Murray, Boyzone star Keith Duffy and Westlife favourite Brian McFadden, as well as ballroom sensation Kai Widdrington.

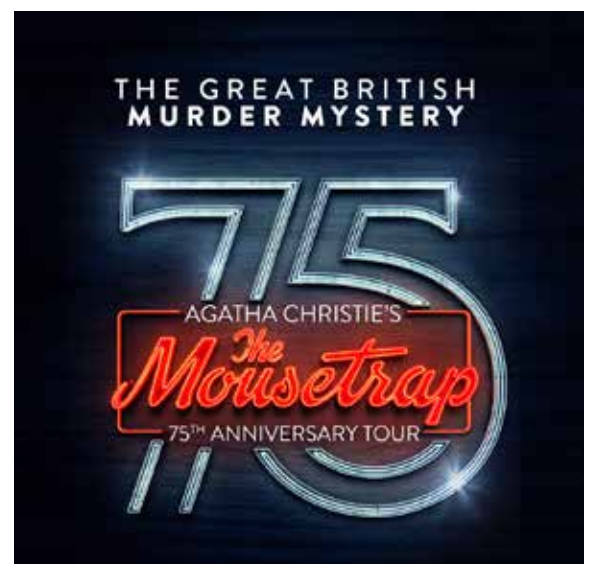
With dozens more shows, concerts, family productions, comedy nights

and special events filling the programme, the Autumn 2026 season highlights Darlington Hippodrome's ongoing commitment to bringing world-class entertainment to audiences across the north east.

For more information on all current shows on sale or to book visit:

www.darlingtonhippodrome.co.uk

or call the Box Office on 01325 405405.



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Christmas PARTY NIGHT

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- ❖ Classic Prawn Cocktail with Marie Rose sauce, iceberg lettuce & buttered bread & butter

MAINS

- ❖ Oven Roasted Turkey Breast, pigs in blankets, potatoes & vegetables with a rich roasting gravy
- ❖ Pan Fried Salmon Fillet with Mediterranean style vegetables, fondant potato & a tomato & basil jus
- ❖ Chestnut Roast with potatoes, vegetables & vegetable gravy

DESSERTS

- ❖ Traditional Christmas Pudding with brandy sauce & rum butter
- ❖ Chocolate Melt in the Middle Pudding with vanilla ice cream & griotte cherries
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SATURDAY **19TH** DECEMBER

£25 PP

CALL 01325319977 TO BOOK TICKETS



WOODHAM GOLF CLUB

Christmas DAY LUNCH

4 COURSE MEAL

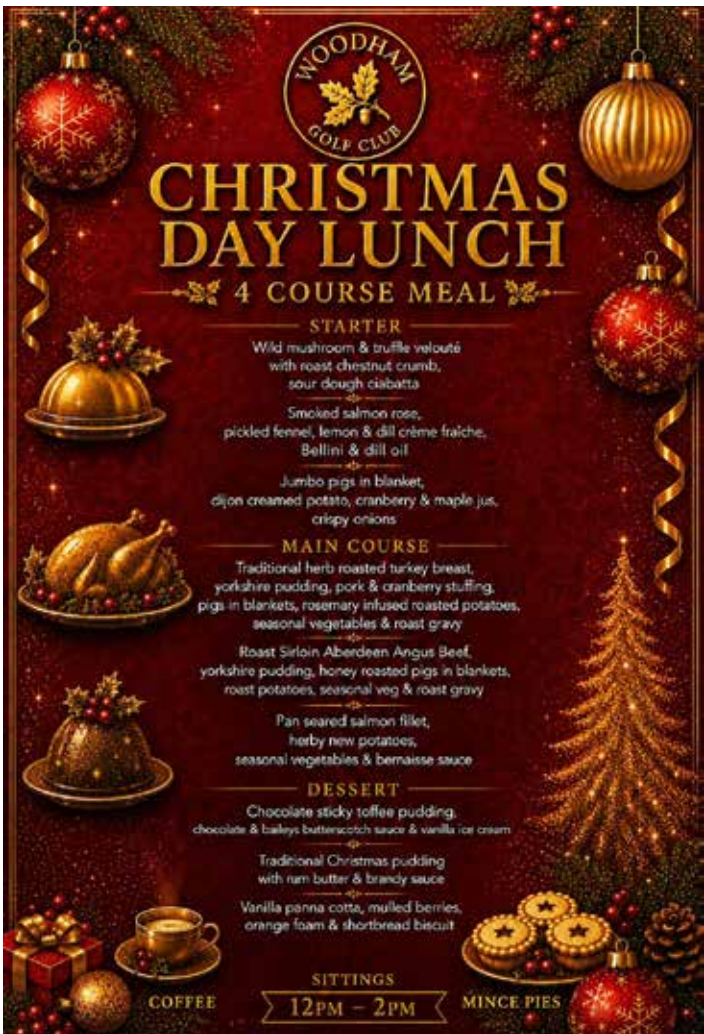
£95 PER ADULT | **£45** PER CHILD

— SITTINGS —

12PM - 2PM

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

WELCOME DRINK INCLUDED



WOODHAM GOLF CLUB

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

4 COURSE MEAL

STARTER

Wild mushroom & truffle velouté with roast chestnut crumb, sour dough ciabatta

Smoked salmon rose, pickled fennel, lemon & dill crème fraîche, Bellini & dill oil

Jumbo pigs in blanket, dijon creamed potato, cranberry & maple jus, crispy onions

MAIN COURSE

Traditional herb roasted turkey breast, yorkshire pudding, pork & cranberry stuffing, pigs in blankets, rosemary infused roasted potatoes, seasonal vegetables & roast gravy

Roast Sirloin Aberdeen Angus Beef, yorkshire pudding, honey roasted pigs in blankets, roast potatoes, seasonal veg & roast gravy

Pan seared salmon fillet, herby new potatoes, seasonal vegetables & bernaise sauce

DESSERT

Chocolate sticky toffee pudding, chocolate & baileys butterscotch sauce & vanilla ice cream

Traditional Christmas pudding with rum butter & brandy sauce

Vanilla panna cotta, mulled berries, orange foam & shortbread biscuit

SITTINGS

12PM - 2PM

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Illuminating Autumn Awaits at The Light

Durham City's newest cultural venue has announced an ambitious programme of events, talks, performances and creative experiences guaranteed to brighten up the dark nights 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/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 recently, 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.

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 1st 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 re-imagined through literature, film, television, photography, public art, music and popular culture. Second Thursday of the month, from 10th 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 17th 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 17th 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 22nd 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.

The first three editions are curated with creatives involved in *Victory Over The Sun*. Look out for Tine Bech on 2nd October, Liz West on 6th November and Neon Workshops on 4th December.

Running until Sunday 17th January, *Victory Over the Sun: Encounters with Light* brings together groundbreaking works by artists who use light in extraordinary ways, including Tracey Emin, Dan Flavin, Olafur Eliasson, and Chila Burman. It explores light as both subject and material, sparking questions of perception, nature and the cosmos.

We Are The Durhams is a permanent exhibition that builds upon the venue's military heritage to tell a deeply human story of identity, belonging and community through fascinating objects, images, sounds and hands-on activities.

Entry to The Light and *We Are The Durhams* is free. To book tickets for *Victory Over The Sun* and autumn/winter events, visit www.thelightdurham.org.uk

To stay up to date with the latest news and events, follow @thelightdurham on Facebook and Instagram.



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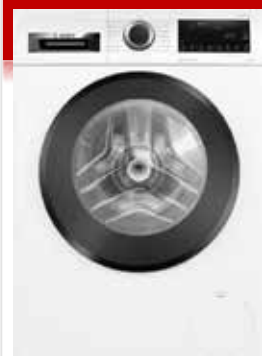
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26-27 Piano Season

Darlington Piano Society presents its 2026-27 International Piano Series. Another season of outstanding pianists and programmes to suit all tastes is a feature of the Society's forthcoming season.

The season begins on Sunday 4th October with a recital by British pianist Thomas Kelly. Thomas is the current Benjamin Britten Fellow at the Royal College of Music. He was a finalist at the Leeds International Competition in 2021 and earlier this year in the International Liszt Utrecht Competition where he won second prize and the award for the best performance of the Liszt sonata (a work that closes his recital here). He is well known for his 'outrageous virtuosity' and technical mastery, characteristics reflected in his programme.

Our pianist on 1st November is Ethan Loch. Blind since birth, he began learning piano at the age of four and graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with First Class Honours in 2026. Also in 2026, he has won the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Concerto Competition and was shortlisted for the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award. He is an accomplished composer and plays two of his own compositions in his programme. His remarkable story features in a BBC documentary – 'Our Lives - Seeing with Sound' broadcast earlier this year and available on BBC Sounds.

Amiri Harewood appears for the Society on 10th January 2027. A recent postgraduate from the Royal College of Music, he was selected as a Grand Prize winner of the Young Classical Artist Trust and Concert Artists Guild International Auditions in May 2024 and named a Classic FM Rising Star for 2025. He has performed throughout the UK and in the 2025/26 season, made his debut at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Berlin Konzerthaus and makes his North American debut with a tour including recitals in Chicago and New York.

Kazakhstan-born Samson Tsoy is our pianist on 7th February. Trained at both the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory and then the Royal College of Music, Samson is resident in London and has built an international career. He recently released his first commercial recording, described as a "probing meditation on creativity" by the Guardian. Alongside his solo career he is one half of the renowned duo with Pavel Kolesnikov. His programme includes the rarely heard piece "Le Chant du Rossignol" by Stravinsky.

The penultimate recital on 7th March is given by Rose McLachlan, who studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. She is a member of a professional pianist dynasty, whose brother Callum played for the society in 2024. Her programme includes a compilation of nocturnes written by female composers in tribute to Chopin.

The final recital on 4th April features the only returnee to the Society, Mishka Rushdie Momen, who played in 2014. Mishka is a noted chamber musician, performing with Steven Isserlis, Timothy Ridout, and Angela Hewitt, amongst many others. Alongside Liszt, her programme features works by Ravel, Faure and Messiaen.

Details of the season can be found at www.dpiano.co.uk and in the brochure widely available in the town and other locations in Co. Durham and elsewhere. All events take place in Central Hall on the listed Sundays at 3pm. Tickets for the full season (£66, U21 free) and for individual recitals (£18, U21 free) can be purchased online via the website, through the brochure's booking form for the season, or on the door, using contactless payment as well as cash.



Table Top Sale

At Simpasture Court, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 5JZ on Saturday 7th November 2026 from 9am - 2pm. Lots of items at bargain prices, and a selection of homemade baking to buy. Free tea and coffee. All welcome.

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Middridge History Society

Our first meeting for Autumn will be on Wednesday 14th October at 7.30pm in Middridge Village Hall.

The History Of Staindrop Church by Keith Simpson.

Keith makes a welcome return to speak about this fascinating building, its architecture and how it has evolved through the centuries.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Admission £3 which includes refreshments.

Avon Court - Christmas Fair

Saturday 21st November at 1pm.

Come along and enjoy homemade cakes along with tea or coffee whilst starting your Christmas shopping.

A range of craft and gift stalls.

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Acorn Community Association AGM

Acorn Community Association's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 8th October 2026 at the Phoenix Club in the upstairs lounge at 6pm.

Refreshments will be provided and the meeting is open to all.

Bishop Auckland Jazz



You just had to be there when Esther Bennett came to sing. Bishop Auckland Jazz invited her to the monthly lunchtime jazz series and how we became enthralled under her spell. She started with Wayne Shorter's Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum and quickly moved into some more familiar tunes like Angel Eyes and Rio de Janeiro Blues that she really enjoyed performing. In the latter she added egg percussion to great effect which really enhanced the Latin feel. Rick Laughlin on piano and Mick Shoulder on bass gave her great support throughout as each one unveiled solos of great complexity and interest. Hints of Billy Holiday, Jimmy Scott and Mark Murphy abounded throughout her vocal delivery as she continued with I Thought About You, Don't Explain, Stolen Moments, You Go To My Head and You've Changed, before it was time for a finish with a rousing performance of Blue Monk.

I can honestly say this was one of the best gigs I have ever heard in Bishop Auckland or anywhere and all credit to #bishopaucklandjazz for giving us the opportunity to hear her. A seasoned jazz singer with tremendous personality and huge vocal and communication skills. I so hope she passes by these northern parts again.

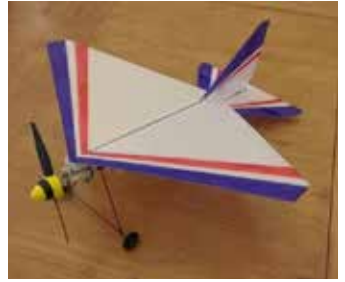
The next lunchtime performance on 9th October will involve the Dean Stockdale Trio with a guest soloist to be announced.

Shildon Model Flying Club - Free Event

Shildon Model Flying Club and its sponsors The British Model Flying Association, Andrew Hardy Construction, Hudspeth Flooring, Leada Auto Parts Darlington, Andrew Crow Property Management, are running a free indoor flying event at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre on 25th October from 12pm until 4pm.

We fly three main categories of free flight, light radio and heavy radio, we will also be demonstrating control line flying as well as having available RC flight simulators, if any one would like to come along, we would be happy to see you there, all children must be accompanied by an appropriate adult.

Any questions, please contact Mark Shipley club chairman at hawkman1@live.co.uk



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Covid Group: Over 75s

Saturday 10th October

Flu Group: 18-65 eligible group

Over 65s

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The clinics start at 8.30am until 12.30pm

Alternatively our patients can contact the surgery to pre-book an appointment in our clinics that are running on various dates, Monday-Friday. We can book these appointments now.

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We live life as if it's filled with nothing but tomorrows, but one day, the tomorrow we are waiting for will start without us.
Little Buddha.

Finalists in Four UK Small Business Awards Categories

Newton Aycliffe based business, 100 Years Botanicals, was launched in November 2025 and, as we approach our first anniversary, we've been named finalists in four categories at the UK Small Business



Awards 2026: Best Small Business, Best New Business, Best Home-Based Business and Best Family Business.

We're also incredibly proud to have received Country Living Artisan Approved status for 2026.

100 Years Botanicals is a small, family-run botanical skincare business, based in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham. We create handmade, vegan skincare centred around carefully chosen botanical ingredients and gentle skincare rituals, with a particular focus on women with sensitive and changing skin.

Since launching, we've continued to grow our range, including our Second Spring facial skincare collection and, more recently, our Autumn Nights bath and body collection, which was created as a warm, comforting seasonal ritual for the autumn months.

The business has grown considerably during our first year, from starting out with a small collection of handmade products to attending markets and events across the North East and developing relationships with local stockists and venues.

To be recognised nationally across four award categories, before we've even celebrated our first birthday, feels like a very special milestone for us, particularly as the business is still based here in Newton Aycliffe and our products continue to be made and developed locally. Heather & David Founders, 100 Years Botanicals.

Fully Funded Better Health at Work Award

Thousands of employees benefit as local businesses embrace workplace wellbeing.

Businesses across Newton Aycliffe are being encouraged to put employee health and wellbeing at the heart of their organisation, following a year of significant impact through the fully funded Better Health at Work Award.

The Better Health at Work Award is helping businesses across the region create healthier workplaces. The recognised framework supports organisations to develop, embed and sustain effective workplace

wellbeing practices, helping employers protect the health of their workforce while creating opportunities for employees to make informed, positive changes to their wellbeing. Karen Stubbings, Project Development Manager for Workplace Health, said: "The Better Health at Work

Award provides businesses with the structure, guidance and support to make that happen, whatever their starting point. We would encourage organisations across Newton Aycliffe to find out more and consider how the award could benefit their workforce."

Businesses in Newton Aycliffe can find out more about the Better Health at Work Award and how to get involved by contacting workplacehealth@pcp.uk.net

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Newton Aycliffe Woman Completes GNR

A Newton Aycliffe woman has completed this year's Great North Run to raise money for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, after seeing how hearing dogs have transformed her aunt's life.

Michelle Mlatilik, who works as a CAD technician for a protection panel company, took on the 13.1-mile challenge on 13th September. She wanted to support the charity after seeing the practical and emotional difference its dogs have made to her aunt, who also lives in Newton Aycliffe.

"Watching my aunt's hearing dogs alert her to sounds is incredible," said Michelle. "I've witnessed first-hand how her first hearing dog, Vimmie, and now her second dog, Gryffin, help her - not just practically, but emotionally too, as constant companions."

Michelle's aunt, Karen, said: "I've been so incredibly lucky to be matched with my first hearing dog, Vimmie, and now Gryffin. It's only possible because of the fundraising efforts of wonderful people like Michelle, the volunteers who support the charity in so many ways and, of course, the staff. Huge thanks to everyone involved."

Michelle's journey into running has been remarkable. She joined Slimming World in 2022 and reached her goal weight after losing three-and-a-half stone. She caught the fitness bug after her friend Laura persuaded her to take part in a Wolf Run obstacle race in Warwickshire in 2023.

Despite never having run a 5K before, Michelle and Laura went on to take part in four ultra marathons in 2025: the 30-mile Pen Llŷn; The Wall, a 70-mile ultra marathon from Carlisle to Newcastle; the 100-mile Rat Race 100; and The Lap, a 47-mile race around Lake Windermere.

Michelle didn't need to do any specific training for the Great North Run, as she has continued to run and walk regularly alongside her ultra marathon challenges. Earlier this year, she re-entered The Wall and made it as far as 63 miles. She also completed the 100-mile Edinburgh to Glamis Castle ultra in July, finishing in 47 hours and 37 minutes.

"On the day of the Great North Run, it was really warm, which I think caught a few people off guard, so the main thing for me was making sure I didn't overdo it in the heat," said Michelle.

"The support from the crowds was incredible - they were three or four deep all around the course and, because you had your name on your bib, they shouted your name and words of encouragement as you passed. It was absolutely buzzing."

"I was just short of my target of three hours, finishing in three hours and eight minutes. I was really proud of that."

"The best part was getting across the finish line and knowing that I'd actually done it. I was in floods of tears. I felt very proud of myself and very lucky that I was physically able to take on the run," she said. "The first person I rang afterwards was my mum. Then I went to the Hearing Dogs tent, where I had a cuddle with hearing dog Elf."

Michelle hopes her story will inspire others to get active or support Hearing Dogs.

"If my story - about someone who has gone from doing no exercise at all to completing a 100-mile ultra marathon two years later - can inspire one person to go out and get fit and raise money for Hearing Dogs, then it's been worth doing," she said.

Anyone who would like to support Michelle's fundraising can visit: <https://events.hearingdogs.org.uk/fundraisers/MichelleMlatilik>



Achievement for Gymnastics Display Team



We are Akrovasia Display Team, a competitive acrobatic gymnastics display team based at Athena Sports Academy, here in Newton Aycliffe.

We would like to share a recent achievement that we are incredibly proud of and would love to have recognised and shared within our local community.

Our team recently travelled to the iconic Blackpool Tower Ballroom to compete with our Moulin Rouge-themed musical display routine. We are delighted to have achieved 1st Place Overall in the Senior category, as well as receiving the Entertainment Award for our performance.

Our Moulin Rouge Musical routine combines acrobatic gymnastics, choreography, theatrical performance (following the story) and entertainment, with the aim of creating a spectacular performance for both the judges and audience.

This achievement is a huge accomplishment for our athletes and coaching team and is something we are extremely proud to have achieved while representing Athena Sports Academy, Newton Aycliffe and the North East.

Editorial Contributions

Editorial contributions, stories and tidbits can be sent to the Newton News editor via email:- paul@newtonnews.co.uk

Alternatively, you can 'contact us' via our website:- www.newtonnews.co.uk

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Any letter for publication should be accompanied with the author's email address, name, address and contact number. These details can be withheld from publication on request.

Newton Aycliffe Boxer Selected to Represent England U17s in Montenegro

A talented 15-year-old boxer from Newton Aycliffe is preparing to represent her country on the European stage after being selected for England's 15-strong squad heading to the U17 European Championships in Montenegro.

Emily Denham, who boxes out of Aycliffe Amateur Boxing Club, has been selected to compete in the women's U70kg category at the championships in Budva from 1st-12th October 2026.

The selection marks another major milestone for the Newton Aycliffe teenager and will see Emily return to Montenegro, where she was crowned U15 European Champion in 2025.

Emily's achievements also include becoming Cadet Schools Champion, Class A Schools Champion, Class B Schools Champion and Junior 4 Nations Champion, building an impressive record of national and international success, despite being just 15 years old.

As a member of the England Boxing Performance Pathway, Emily regularly travels to Sheffield for England training, alongside maintaining a demanding daily training and running schedule.

Her long-term ambition is to represent Great Britain at the 2032 Olympic Games in Brisbane.

Looking ahead to the championships, and her longer-term ambitions, Emily said: "I'm really proud of what I've achieved so far, and I'm so excited to have the opportunity to represent England again.

"Boxing is a huge part of my life, and I'm grateful to everyone who supports me, especially my family, my coaches and everyone at Aycliffe Amateur Boxing Club. My dream is to one day compete at the Olympic Games, and I'm determined to work as hard as I can to give myself the best chance of getting there."

Behind Emily's achievements is a strong support network. Her parents, Sean and Sarah, have supported her throughout her boxing journey, with Sean also playing an active role in her training at the club, as a coach and sparring partner.

Emily has also received strong support from Aycliffe Amateur Boxing Club, which has played an important role in her development and achievements since she first took up the sport.

Les Gibson, owner of Aycliffe Amateur Boxing Club, who will travel to Montenegro to support Emily at the championships, said: "Everyone at the club is incredibly proud of Emily. We've watched her develop from a 10-year-old, just starting out in boxing, into a European champion representing her country. "She is a fantastic young boxer and a great example to others. I'm delighted to be travelling to Montenegro to support her and, along with everyone at Aycliffe Amateur Boxing Club, I'll be wishing her the very best of luck. She has an incredibly exciting future ahead of her."

Help Support Emily's Journey

With Emily already achieving national and international success at just 15 and progressing through the England Boxing pathway, businesses have an exciting opportunity to support her at an early stage in what could be a remarkable boxing career.

As Emily continues to develop and compete at national and international level, sponsorship will help towards the costs of training, travel and competing at an elite level, as she works towards her ultimate ambition of representing Great Britain at the Olympic Games.

For a local or regional business, it is an opportunity to support an ambitious young North East athlete early in her

journey, share in her progress and be associated with her achievements as her career develops.

Businesses interested in becoming part of Emily's journey, and discussing sponsorship opportunities, can contact Sean Denham at: sean296@googlemail.com. You can also follow Emily's journey on Instagram - @emilydenham42.





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As the league is now in full swing, the club has been focussing on developing their male and female pathways, as part of our FA 3* Accreditation, which the club are proud to be one of the elite few within Durham FA.

Sister Club – Durham Women Football Club

We have been an official sister club to Durham Women FC for several seasons and this year started with a parade of all the sister clubs in the area at the first match of the season. Over 30 girls from our Wildcats, and our teams, attended and were looked after by Durham WFC and, after the match, they were invited to meet the players. This was then followed, on Sunday 20th September, when the girls from our club were chosen to be the mascots for the day. They walked out with the players and were presented before the game. It was a fabulous experience for these young girls.



Women's Recreational Football Sessions

The club recognised that there were limited opportunities for women to start football or get back into football after several years away from the game. Until Women's first team coach, Shaun Wilson, decided to run open sessions on a Sunday morning. These are for both fitness and footballing skills, working together. These sessions have attracted over 20 women to register on the sessions and is now proving a very popular addition to our Female Pathway.

Newton Aycliffe Women's Football Team

The rebuild of our Women's team continues to gather pace, as we look to rejoin the Durham FA league in September 2027. Several women from the recreational sessions have taken the step back into football and are joined by members of last seasons team, who are wanting to be a part of the rebuild, as they bring experience back to the team. Exciting times for the team and Shaun Wilson who heads up the final part of our Female Pathway.

Football Development Sessions

The growth in children's football in recent years, across the country and at the football club, has been enormous. The club is aiming to keep pace with demand with the help of our loyal group of qualified volunteer coaches. The well established Wildcats Girls sessions now have two sessions, one for 5-6yrs old and one for 7-8 yrs old, both are at full capacity and the Little Eagles Boys sessions has a thriving group of 5-8 yr old boys, training every week, as they prepare to join teams.

Recently it was noticeable that the demand for sessions

for pre school children, aged 3-4 yrs old, was also growing, so the club forged ahead with a new mixed group named Rising Stars, as this is exactly what they are, the future of the football club and stars in the making.

Parental Sideline Behaviour Workshops

After being an integral part of the steering group, to produce a workshop, to advise and educate new parents to grass roots football, on the behaviour expected on the sidelines on match day. Over the following three seasons, more than 150 parents have attended these workshops. In 2024 we were recognised for all the work we were doing, to improve sideline behaviour, at the Annual Durham FA awards night. This year we have been officially appointed, as an approved deliverer of the Sideline Behaviour Improvement Programme, so the work continues.

Coaches CPD Workshops

In September, 18 coaches, from teams across the football club, attended a CPD event at Greenfield Academy, presented by Andy Dixon from Durham FA. The session started with 1 hour of theory, followed by 1 hour practical, around 'Finishing'. Thank you to all those who gave up their time to attend and a special thanks to the players from our Under 13 Falcons, who volunteered for the practical session (and their parents for giving up a Monday evening to bring the lads along). These sessions will be a benefit to all our players as we progress through this season, with another 2 planned.

If you need any more information about the club, follow us on News at Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club.



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European Goalkeepers Visit MUGA at New College Durham for Training

The state-of-the-art Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at New College Durham recently welcomed professional goalkeepers from across Europe, demonstrating how the college's latest major investment is creating new opportunities for elite sport professionals, students and the wider community.

The all-weather facility at the college's Framwellgate Moor campus was recently used by Modern-Day GK (MDGK), a specialist goalkeeping organisation, for an intensive training session involving professional players from Sweden, Portugal and Poland.

Modern-Day GK was established 10 years ago by brothers Lee, Shaun, and Mark Robinson. It focuses on modern player mindsets, decision-making, game analysis, and error-resilience training rather than traditional, rigid shot-stopping drills. With backgrounds in professional football, strength and conditioning, and sports coaching between them, the approach of MDGK combines technical development with a strong focus on confidence, decision-making and helping young goalkeepers learn from mistakes in a supportive training environment.

The business has also developed a strong network of contacts across professional football, helping players who have been released from clubs or previously overlooked by the traditional pathway to find new opportunities. In recent years, eight of its goalkeepers have progressed from being outside the professional game to signing full-time contracts.

Mark Robinson, from Modern-Day GK, said: "We're always looking for venues where we can train and, ultimately, we want to be on a full-size football pitch that meets the professional standards we need.

"When I heard how good the facility was here, I had to see it for myself, and the pitch is

amazing. We had three professional goalkeepers here at New College Durham's MUGA and, when you reach their level, you want to coach on a professionally maintained pitch, and this definitely is!"



The MUGA forms part of New College Durham's continued investment in high-quality facilities for students and the community. Officially opened in 2025, the facility features an all-weather pitch built to FA and Sport England standards, and it is already popular with local football organisations and forms an important part of the college's Football Development Centre.

The college, which has made more than £34 million of investment in facilities and advanced equipment over the past five years is currently investing a further £6 million in redesigning, rebuilding and re-equipping its sports and music facilities due for completion in 2027. This project further reinforces its commitment to providing students with the latest and most relevant facilities.

With weekday use by students already strong and further opportunities being explored for local clubs and leagues, the MUGA is increasingly becoming a hub for sporting activity in County Durham.

Barry Poskett, Curriculum Manager for Sport at New College Durham, said

"This is much more than just a pitch. Here at New College Durham, we actively pursue and achieve the ideal of being a catalyst for positive change. It is great to see our facilities being used by organisations across the whole spectrum of ability. Whether starting out as an under-6 team member or attracting interest from players in Europe seeking to benefit from the coaching skills and facilities in the North East is a fantastic achievement for everyone involved. Our facilities are here to inspire talent, build resilience, and create pathways from grassroots football to professional academies."

Photo: Brothers Lee (L), Shaun (2nd R), and Mark (R) Robinson were joined for training by three international professional goalkeepers at the fantastic facilities at New College Durham.

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Under 13's Reds ran out for 5-3 against Willington Youth. Koa scored all five of the goals.

Under 15's Blacks entertained Wear United, grabbing a well-deserved 1-0 win with Kai grabbing the goal. POTM was Connor.

Under 8's had a great game against Middleton Rangers, with Leo scoring an amazing hat-trick. Arthur and Henry scored the other goals.

Under 10's Blues travelled to face TIBS Blues, controlling the game from the start, goals from Jude, Leland (2), Nate and Reggie helped Aycliffe on their way. PPOTM was Carter and POTM was Reggie.

Under 14's Whites travelled to face Hebburn, narrowly losing out 5-4. Billy scored a great hat-trick with Rex adding the other goal. MOTM was Billy.

Under 12's grabbed a well-deserved 2-3 win away to Prissick Rovers Milan. Oliver T and Noah A scored the goals. Isaac D picked up MOTM.

Under 13's Reds ran out 10-1 winners against Cleveland Juniors. Koa, Marshall and Aidan all grabbed hat-tricks with Laitia adding the other goal. Koa and Logan were MOTM.

Under 13's Blacks faced Teesside in what was a tough game in the rain. JJ and Hughie netted for Aycliffe, with Caleb being awarded MOTM.

Under 10's Juniors hosted Marske Athletic and came away with some positive performances. Lee scored the goal for Aycliffe.

Under 7's played their first official game away to Nunthorpe and the whole team did brilliant. Goals scored by Rory (6), Theo (3), Karson (2), Cassadee (2), Alfie and Joey. POTM was six goal hero Rory.

Under 11's Reds faced Newton Aycliffe Youth Eagles in a local derby. A great game between saw Layton and Fox (4) score the goals for Aycliffe. POTM was Jan and Fox.

Aycliffe Whites faced Linthorpe Academicals, getting a great result with goals from Ethan (3), Teddy (2), Franco, Lucas R and Fred.

Under 11's Juniors faced Bishop St Marys in an entertaining game. Goals from Fletcher, Lincoln, Vinnie and Connor. MOTM was Reggie.

Aycliffe Seniors – Lost 3-6 to Durham Rangers. Goals from Noah, Sam and Ollie. MOTM was Andrew B.

Under 15's Juniors narrowly lost 2-1 to Peterlee, with Jonah scoring Aycliffe's goal from the spot.

Under 14's Blacks played Tibs Blues, winning comfortably 4-2, with goals from Lleyton, Jack, Kai and Fletcher. MOTM was Riley B and Tyler.

Under 12's Blacks travelled to Seaham, grabbing a well-deserved win. Goals from Kaiden (3), Ollie (2), Franco (2), Theo, Jake and Alex. MOTM was Alex.

Under 14's Whites faced Hebburn Town and ran out 5-1 winners. Goals from Billy, Oscar, Jarrod, Chase and Elliott. MOTM was Kian.

Under 15's Blacks travelled to face Hilda Park, narrowly going down 2-0. MOTM were Olly, Kai and Ben.

Under 13's Reds got a great 8-1 win v Whinney Banks. Goals from Koa (2), Marhsall (2), Alfie, Aidan (2) and Jenson. MOTM were Koa and Leo.

Under 8's played a great game against Marton Royals, with Leo (2) and Frankie scoring the goals for Aycliffe.

Under 9's faced Billingham Junior Blues, putting in a spirited performance against tough opposition, MOTM was Seb.

Under 11's Reds faced Darlington Spraire Lads, with all three goals being scored by Fox. POTM were Korben and Jacob.

Under 10's Blues faced Kader Juniors, after a slow start, Leland scored an excellent quick fire hat trick with Nate scoring the other goal.

Under 12's grabbed an important 1-2 at Mount Pleasant Rangers. Goals from Oliver and Seb. MOTM was Harvey P.

Under 12's Whites grabbed an impressive 9-0 win over Guisborough, with goals from Ethan (3), Lucas (2), Fred (2), Alfie and Teddy. POTM were Oscar and Leo.

Under 13's Blacks travelled to face Kader, with Mason grabbing Aycliffe's goal on what was a tough day. MOTM was Sid.

Under 15's Juniors welcomed Witton Park to Woodham Academy, grabbing a great 3-1 win, with Jensen grabbing a hat-trick.



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NE Mayor £250m Skills Plan Jobs Goes Live

The first trainees have stepped through the doors for Mayor Kim McGuinness' new £250m adult skills programme, marking the official launch of one of the region's most ambitious training offers in decades. North East Mayor Kim McGuinness has hailed the start of the Adult Skills Training Programme, designed to boost job opportunities in construction, manufacturing, tech, foundational roles and the fast growing green economy.

It comes as scores of skills providers across the region open their doors to adults seeking new opportunities and fresh starts.

Part of Mayor Kim's New Deal for North East Workers, the £80m a year investment will create clear pathways into jobs in the region's most in demand industries.

Announced at the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority's March Cabinet meeting, the programme will transform adult skills training by ensuring the right training is available to the right people, in the right places, at the right time.

The launch follows an unprecedented process of consultation and collaboration between the North East MSA and colleges, training

providers, local authorities, employers and VCSE organisations to shape the best way forward.

Mayor Kim said: "I said we'd change the way we deliver adult skills training in the North East, and now we're doing just that.

"Every bit of our new skills investment is focused on one thing – helping people move from training straight into proper jobs in our growing industries.

"That could be in the green economy, digital and tech, in the foundational jobs we all rely on so much, like nursery teaching or working in a shop, pub or restaurant, or in the construction roles we need to build the homes of the future.

"Support is there for people to get the skills, confidence and fair chances they deserve."

The new programme is designed to tackle long standing skills shortages while ensuring residents can benefit from the region's expanding clean energy and innovation sectors. It will also strengthen the foundational economy, including health, care, logistics and community services.

Support will be targeted at adults with low qualifications, people facing health barriers, women entering technical fields, care experienced young adults and those seeking to progress in work.

The plan is built around three strands of support: Skills Foundation for essential skills and confidence; Skills Activation for technical training and apprenticeships; and Skills for Work for employer designed courses leading directly to jobs.

Mayor McGuinness said the programme is central to her mission to make the North East "the home of real opportunity."

"My message is this: if you're looking for a fresh start, we're here to back you. If you're an employer, we're building the skilled workforce you've been asking for. And if you're a training provider, you're central to making sure people get the right skills for real jobs. This programme is about making sure no one is left behind."

By 2029, the MSA expects to see higher employment rates, more people progressing into better paid roles, and a stronger pipeline of skilled workers for key industries. The programme also aims to reduce economic inactivity and widen access to training for communities that have historically been underserved.

For more information visit:

<https://www.northeast-ca.gov.uk/projects/skills-programmes>



Aims to Get County Durham Moving

Age UK County Durham's commitment to help County Durham's older population stay active has been helped by the appointment of an Activity Coordinator to lead its Communities in Motion programme.

Sharon Gooch, 54, from Sedgefield, is now working across the county to help people access activities and exercise. She commented: "Our aim is to make it easy for the older members of our communities to access appropriate exercise. We're working closely with Durham County Council and others to map where the need is greatest, filling in the gaps so that there is provision and support across the whole county. "One initial event, at Wilton Castle, saw 12 people try kayaking. What started as an introduction to a new sport, became a social occasion for the participants. It's great that such an activity has the added benefit of social connection."

Communities in Motion is aiming to reach residents in County Durham aged 65 and over with a range of free or low cost exercise opportunities. In October, Sharon is launching free seated exercise classes in Seaham as well as Dance Fitness Classes in Shildon. Anyone interested in finding out more or signing up should contact Age UK County Durham on 0191 386 3856 or email info@ageukcountydurham.org.uk.

She added: "When you hear someone say 'I was never able to do this before' you know that the exercise is having an impact, and the more people who can access exercise in their community, the healthier our older generation will be."

Before joining Age UK County Durham, Sharon was a Health and Wellbeing Coach for Stockton Primary Care Network. She is also a fitness instructor and has been teaching classes for more than 15 years.

Communities in Motion is a national campaign funded by the London Marathon Foundation, and delivered in County Durham by Age UK County Durham. Age UK County Durham is the 'go to' organisation for anyone aged 50 or over living in County Durham. It is a stand-alone registered charitable organisation, and a brand partner of Age UK.



Changes to Postal Vote Renewal Periods

People wanting to vote by post in County Durham elections are advised they now need to renew their application every three years.

Durham County Council is letting people know of changes introduced under the Elections Act 2022.

Once three years have passed, a person will need to make a new application if they wish to continue voting by post.

People are advised that the quickest and easiest way to reapply for a postal vote is online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote.

Nevertheless, anyone living in County Durham who is required to renew their postal vote will be sent an invitation through the post or via email, if they have provided the council with their email address.

The email will come from Gov.uk Notify on the council's behalf and the address it will arrive from will be electoralservices.dcc@notifications.service.gov.uk. Email invitations have been sent from Monday 14th September.

If the council does not have a person's email address, it will contact them by post from Friday 2nd October. A paper application to renew a postal vote will be attached to the letter.

Anyone who no longer wishes to vote by post, should email the council at electoralservices@durham.gov.uk with their name, address and a request to remove their postal vote application. Anyone who requires further assistance from the council's electoral services team should call 03000 261 212 or email electoralservices@durham.gov.uk.

Further information on how to apply to vote by post can be found on the council's website at www.durham.gov.uk/PostalVote.

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PCC Calls on Employers to Make Road Safety a Boardroom Priority as 'Life is Precious' Campaign Hits The Road

Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen is calling on employers across the country to make road safety a boardroom priority as another County Durham transport company takes the powerful Life is Precious message onto Britain's roads.

A newly wrapped trailer has been unveiled in partnership with Newton Aycliffe-based Stiller Warehousing & Distribution Ltd and Durham Constabulary's Roads Policing Unit, taking vital road safety messages directly to thousands of motorists. It is the latest phase of the Life is Precious campaign, which highlights the devastating consequences of the Fatal Four: speeding, drink and drug driving, not wearing a seatbelt and using a mobile phone behind the wheel.

Stiller becomes the second County Durham transport operator to carry the campaign on its vehicles, following KATEM Logistics Ltd last year.

The Commissioner now wants more employers, from businesses running a handful of vans to major national fleet operators, to follow their lead.

The call comes amid growing concern about substance misuse and work-related road risk.

Department for Transport figures show the proportion of commercial drivers involved in fatal or serious collisions who tested positive for drink or drugs increased from 3% in 2015 to 11% in 2025, while research on behalf of National Highways and RoadSafe found nearly one in three road deaths involves a driving-for-work journey. Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen, national joint lead for road safety for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, said: "If you drive for work, road safety is workplace safety. Employers have both an opportunity and a responsibility to help prevent tragedy before it happens.

"Every death on our roads leaves a family facing consequences that last a lifetime. That is why Life is Precious is such an important campaign its message is simple, powerful and impossible to argue with.

"I am delighted Stiller is helping us take that message across the country. But I want this to go much further.

"Whether a business operates two vans or 200 HGVs, I want employers asking themselves: are we doing everything we reasonably can to keep our employees and everyone else using our roads safe?

"That means good driving-for-work policies, effective management of risk and taking drink and drug misuse seriously. Stiller is demonstrating what responsible employers can do through comprehensive workplace testing covering its whole workforce.

"Road safety belongs in the boardroom as well as behind the wheel. I want more businesses to become road safety ambassadors, join us and help make these messages impossible to ignore. The more organisations we bring with us, the more lives we can save."

Stiller already operates a comprehensive drug and alcohol testing programme covering employees at every level of the business.

Managing Director Brian Simpson said: "When we introduced testing, drugs were the main issue we identified. From an insurance and due diligence perspective, we knew we needed to take action.

"We now test all employees, not just drivers, right through to director level. We carry out testing where there are concerns about impairment, following workplace incidents and as part of our pre-employment checks.



"Road safety is everyone's responsibility and we are proud to support the Life is Precious campaign and help spread these important messages."

The Life is Precious campaign was created by Mari Johnson following the deaths of her mother, Elaine Sullivan, and stepfather, David Daglish, from Seaham, on the A1(M) in 2021. They were killed after a lorry driver, who had repeatedly used his mobile phone in the lead-up to the collision, crashed into their vehicle. He was subsequently sentenced to eight years and ten months in prison.

Commissioner Allen has made Safer Roads a priority within her Police, Crime and Justice Plan and is working locally and nationally to prevent deaths and serious injuries through a combination of education, employer engagement and robust enforcement.

She is also encouraging employers to engage with the National Highways Agency Driving for Better Business programme to strengthen the way they manage occupational road risk.

The Commissioner added: "Behind every road death is a person, a family and a community. That is why the message on these trailers matters: Life is Precious. No journey, deadline, phone call or delivery is worth somebody's life."

Picture Shows (L-R): Nicola Stavers, Policy and Commissioning Officer for the Durham PCC's Office, Peter Tate, Strategic Casualty Reduction Co-Ordinator for the Durham Road and Armed Policing Unit, Brian Simpson, Managing Director of Stiller and PCC Joy Allen.

(Photo credit to Chris Booth, BUSINESSiQ Magazine).

BTCC Drivers Pay a Visit to Darlington Memorial Hospital

BTCC drivers bring smiles to patients and staff at Darlington Memorial Hospital.

Drivers and representatives from the Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) visited the hospital on Friday 4th September, ahead of the championship's race weekend at nearby Croft Circuit. The visit gave drivers and team representatives an opportunity to spend time with patients, visitors and staff, while recognising the work of teams across County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.

The afternoon began with a meet and greet in Hollies Restaurant, where colleagues, patients and visitors were able to chat with the drivers, take photographs and collect merchandise.

The group then visited Ward 31, Trauma and Orthopaedics, where drivers spent time talking with patients and colleagues.

Among those they met was Dale Coulthard who revealed during the conversation that his uncle is former Formula One driver David Coulthard.

Despite the family connection to motorsport, Dale admitted he had not previously followed the BTCC, although the drivers may have changed that.

Dale said: "This really made my day. I wasn't particularly into touring car racing before, but I think they may have convinced me to give it a watch. I may have found a new sport!"

"I really appreciated the drivers taking the time to come into the hospital and speak to patients. It was a lovely surprise and really brightened up my day."

After leaving Ward 31, the group headed to the hospital's Pathology Department, where colleagues gave them a detailed guided tour of the service.

The team talked them through how the department operates, how samples move through the service and are analysed, and even explained the composition of blood and the information laboratory teams can obtain from it to support diagnosis, treatment and monitoring.

Nicola McKeague, Blood Sciences Department Manager at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"It was fantastic to welcome the British Touring Car Championship to Darlington Memorial Hospital and to see the positive reaction from patients and colleagues throughout the afternoon."

"The drivers and team representatives were incredibly generous with their time and showed a genuine interest in the people they met and the work taking place across the hospital."

"We were particularly pleased to welcome them into Pathology and give them an insight into what happens behind the scenes. Our team put a lot of work into the visit, talking through how the department operates, how samples are processed and analysed, and some of the science behind blood and the information it can provide to support patient care."

"It was a really enjoyable opportunity to showcase the work of our colleagues, and we're very grateful to everyone from the BTCC for taking the time to visit us."

Simon Melluish, BTCC Communications Director, said: "It was a privilege to visit Darlington Memorial Hospital and spend time with patients and staff."

"We came hoping to bring a bit of enjoyment to people's day, but visits like this are incredibly rewarding for us too. It was fascinating to see some of the work that goes on behind the scenes and to meet so many people who contribute to looking after patients."

"The welcome we received was brilliant and we'd like to thank everyone at the hospital for having us."

The visit took place ahead of the Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship at Croft Circuit on 5th and 6th September.



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A Tree of Hope Begins to Grow at Bishop Auckland Hospital

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

Dame Sue Snowden 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.

Dame Sue began chemotherapy at the Mara Unit on Christmas Eve and completed her treatment in June. She was invited by the team to place the first fingerprint on the tree and is now preparing to return to the unit as a volunteer.

Dame Sue said: "It was a huge privilege to be asked to place the first fingerprint, and I was thrilled to pieces.

"The cancer journey is tough. It's very, very tough. There are moments when you're anxious and frightened, and then you're surrounded by kindness and love, and it lifts you.

"For me, this tree is about hope and life. It has strong roots and shows strength and growth, and that's what you must draw upon during a journey like this.

"Even being here and looking at it, knowing how many other people are going through something similar, I think that can be really reassuring. As more patients add their fingerprints, it will be wonderful to see it grow."

Dame Sue, who recently retired after serving as His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of County Durham, also praised the care and support she received from colleagues at the Mara Unit.

She added: "The care here has been exemplary. Everyone takes the time to get to know you and you're surrounded by people who lift you up when you need it. I can't say enough about the team here."

The idea for the mural came from colleagues within the Mara Unit, who wanted to create something positive and meaningful for patients receiving care there.

The artwork features three shades of green which patients can choose from when adding their fingerprint, alongside other details including a robin, which represents patients the team has sadly lost.

Michelle Mitchinson, Chemotherapy Sister at the Mara Unit, said: "We wanted to create something that reflects the people who come through the Mara Unit and the strength they show throughout their treatment.

"Cancer treatment can be an incredibly difficult and emotional journey, but there is also so much support, kindness and hope here. We hope the tree becomes a visual reminder to patients that they aren't going through that journey alone.

"It was really special to have Sue add the very first fingerprint. Over time, we hope to see the branches fill with the fingerprints of our patients, with every one representing an individual and their own story."

Dame Sue is now hoping to give something back to the unit which supported her through treatment by undertaking the necessary training to become a volunteer.



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OBITUARY

Ann Cook
(née Atherton)

Wife of the late Peter, passed away peacefully on the 26th August, aged 82. Funeral took place on the 14th September at Wear Valley Crematorium. Loving Mam to Pam and Gary, Mother in Law to David and Julie, much loved Nana to Owen, Becky and Jade. With special thanks to the Co-op Funeral Services, Celebrant Carole Briggs, The Bay Horse, Middridge and family and friends for comfort and support. 'Forever in our hearts, Mam'.

IN MEMORIAM

Syd Howarth MBE
21st October 1937 – 29th October 2018

Remembering with love always, our dear Father, Grandfather, Great Grandfather and a much-loved friend to so many, on what would have been his birthday. Another year has passed, yet the love we have for you remains as strong as ever. Time may change the way we remember, but it can never lessen the place you hold in our hearts.

We think of you in the quiet moments, in the family stories and memories that are shared, and in the little things that bring a smile and remind us of you. Your kindness, humour, wisdom and love remain a lasting part of all our lives. We are so grateful for the years we had together and for the countless memories that we treasure. Although we would give anything to have you with us still, we take comfort in knowing that your life touched so many people and that your memory lives on through all those who loved and knew you.

Always loved, always remembered . . .
and forever missed.

Forever in the hearts of your loving family.



Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

GHS Crane Hire Limited trading as GHS Crane Hire Ltd of 66 Close House, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 8RS is applying for a licence to use Newton Aycliffe Truck Stop, 1 Spring Road, Aycliffe Business Park, DL5 6AJ as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicles and 0 trailers. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must, at the same time, send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licence.

1-10-2026

FIRBANK

Jeffrey, of Newton Aycliffe, peacefully in hospital on 16th September, aged 79 years.

A much loved Husband, Dad, Grandad, Father-in-Law and Brother. Family and friends please meet for a service at Wear Valley Crematorium on Friday 9th October at 3.30pm.

Tomas Wooley
'Tom'

20th January 1947
- 10th September
2026

Of Newton Aycliffe, passed away at Aycliffe Care Home. Sadly missed by Brothers and Family. Funeral was held on 28th September, thanks to all who attended.

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Leslie Cairns



22.10.2025

Our first year without you, Les, and yes, life has to go on, but it will never be the same.

Forever missed and loved by your Wife Ellen, Son Philip, Daughter Andrea and Grandsons Jack, Sam and Harry.

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7				2	5			
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	9			5			4	
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