There’s still plenty that’s Great about the North East this Autumn

Wednesday 26 September, 2018

The summer season might be drawing to an end, but the North East’s cultural offering is going from strength to strength, with an exciting programme of events planned for the whole of Autumn.

Twelve local authorities, the region’s five universities, the North East Chamber of Commerce, and individuals from Historic England and Arts Council England are working together under the North East Culture Partnership (NECP) banner – with the aim of championing, promoting and supporting the North East’s arts and heritage sectors.

Peter Bromley partnership manager at NECP says, “The Great Exhibition of the North showed just what a fantastic arts, heritage and culture offer we have in the region, now at the North East Culture Partnership, we want to ensure the legacy of GEON lives on throughout the North East, from Hartlepool to the Tees Valley, South Tyneside to Sunderland, Middlesbrough to Redcar, Durham, Gateshead and everywhere in between, we are privileged to have such a vibrant and diverse cultural landscape, we want to keep reminding people of that!”

Happening in September…

Join Hartlepool Art Gallery’s first ever artist-in-residence, Julie Cockburn on Friday 21st September, as she unveils *Stories from the Hive*, exploring the parallels between how she experiences and understands the world, and how bees interact, communicate and work together within the hive environment. Officially opening on Saturday 22nd September, and running until Wednesday 10th October, *Stories from the Hive* is one not to ‘bee’ missed!

Festival fans are in for a treat the weekend of 22nd – 23rd September, with the much-anticipated return of both the *Last Train Home Festival* in Darlington, and Redcar’s *Festival of Thrift*. Utilising the venues and spaces around Darlington train station, *Last Train Home Festival* brings together a whopping 45 acts across six stages for a fun-filled day of music and comedy. Unlike many other festivals, *Last Train Home Festival* is unique in that it finishes, as the name suggests, with enough time to catch the last train home.

If thrifty-living is more your thing, head to Kirkleatham Museum & Grounds for the popular *Festival of Thrift*. The weekend of 22nd – 23rd September is set to be jam-packed, with a programme of activities and entertainment focusing on recycling, upcycling and sustainable living.

Locals are encouraged to head outdoors across the last weekend of September for Middlesbrough Town Hall’s *Orange Pip Market*. Taking place on the last Saturday of every month, Orange Pip features the best in local and regional food, as well as live music and creative activities – all in the heart of Middlesbrough’s open-air Centre Square.

Fans of the outdoors are catered for in Sunderland and Redcar, too on September 30th. Take part in a three, seven or eleven-mile walk in *The Active Sunderland BIG Walk*, discovering the unspoiled countryside of New Herrington and the Wear riverside as you go. Head out in support of Redcar’s *37th Half Marathon* runners and take advantage of the free programme of activities and entertainment, suitable for all of the family.

Catch Stockton’s ground-breaking, free exhibition, *The Danger Tree*, which combines traditional painting with interactive technology to evoke the devastation of WWI. In association with The Royal British Legion, Scarlett Raven and Marc Marot, and marking the centenary of the end of the first World War, *The Danger Tree* runs through the whole of September, and is visually brought to life by award-winning film set designer, Kave Quinn.

Happening in October…

The Glass Ceiling, an ambitious new visual theatre work, is set to mark 100 years since the first British women were given the Right to Vote. Inspired by the Suffragettes and Suffragists, the show celebrates activists from the Tees Valley region, whose courage propelled this historic movement to achieve political recognition. *The Glass Ceiling* begins on 5th October in Redcar, moving to Hartlepool on 19th October, and Middlesbrough Centre Square on 27th October.

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Ann Cleeves, one of Britain's most successful crime writers is heading to South Shields' The Word on October 9th, where she will be discussing her book, Wild Fire. *An audience with Ann Cleeves* will take place from 6:30pm – 8pm, and fans of the award-winning Shetland series, of which Wild Fire is the final instalment, will have the opportunity to get their copy signed by Cleeves on the night!

As Halloween approaches, Kirkleatham Museum & Grounds will be transformed into a 'horrifying world that you couldn't imagine – even in your worst nightmares'. From 12th – 31st October, the North East's largest scare event, *Scream Factory* returns to the Tees Valley, and is set to scare the young and the old alike. Younger scare-seekers are encouraged to head to The Word on Wednesday 24th and 31st October for *Spooktacular Halloween Stories* – an immersive and Spooktacular storytelling session perfect for under 7's and their families.

If scaring yourself silly sounds like a nightmare you'd rather leave behind in bed, head to The Word instead, where popular Channel 5 Yorkshire Vet, Julian Norton will be sharing stories of the huge variety of animals and people he has met in his career. Sometimes sad, often funny, and always warm and compassionate, Norton's heartfelt tales and amusing anecdotes will bring to life the world of a working vet. Fans of the show are encouraged to book tickets to the event on Thursday 18th October. It's certainly one not to be missed!

Supporters of the *Hartlepool Folk Festival* are in luck – the festival is celebrating its fourth year with a newly-announced grant from Arts Council England. The festival, which has sold out for the last two years, is also upscaling its mainstage events from the 400-seat Hartlepool Town Hall Theatre to the 1200-seat Borough – a testament to the event's popularity, artistic quality, and its contribution to the region's cultural life – and will take place from 19th – 21st October.

Those who prefer jazz to folk are encouraged to head to Middlesbrough Town Hall's *Jazz Weekender*, which takes place on the same weekend as Hartlepool's Folk Festival. Programmed by Gateshead International Jazz Festival's Ros Rigby, the *Jazz Weekender* will include a nod to the post, but also firmly look to the future. Drawing in big names, such as Hailey Tuck, The Printmakers and Mingus Big Band, the festival is set to be an action-packed weekend in celebration of the genre.

In late-October, Sunderland is the place to be, with *Sunderland Literature Festival* running from 16th October – 4th November, and the *Sunderland Illuminations and Festival of Light* taking place from 18th October – 18th November. The *Literature Festival* is an annual celebration of the written word, and has something for everyone, with an event programme of local artists, authors and themes taking place at locations throughout the city. Roker Park's hugely-popular *Illuminations and Festival of Light* returns with classic favourites sitting alongside sparkling new installations – allowing returning visitors and new visitors alike to view the event in a whole new light.

For more information on any of the cultural events happening across the North East this Autumn, please refer to each individual local authority's website

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