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More than 100 family-friendly events, happenings, workshops, performances and exhibitions are planned for Belfast Culture Night.

CULTURE NIGHT BELFAST RETURNS WITH A NEW LOOK AND 100+ ACTIVITIES CITY-WIDE

Culture Night Belfast returns on Friday 19th September with a new look and 100+ activities city-wide

Residents and visitors are invited to free pop-up activities and drop-in events taking place at venues from 4pm to 10pm, as part of Culture Night celebrations across Ireland.

This year's event – the first since 2021 – is funded by Belfast City Council, with additional support from

Linen Quarter and Cathedral Quarter BIDs.

Programmed and delivered by MayWe and DaisyChain Inc, it has been designed with the city's artists and creatives, via an open call process.

The result is a programme of more than 100 family-friendly events, happenings,

workshops, performances and exhibitions, reaching into every corner of the city and across Belfast city centre.

Whether it's Titanic wrestling at Grand Central Station, the Firepoise fire and light show in CS Lewis Square, Oíche Chultúir rooftop concert at

An Chultúrlann, a family roller disco in Shaftesbury Recreation Centre, or live oil paintings of commuters as they travel through York Street Station, Culture Night has it all.

**Continued on
page 4**

OVER 15,000 VISIT EXHIBITION AT TITANIC BELFAST

TITANIC Belfast has revealed that it has attracted over 15,000 visitors in just three months to view its free exhibition celebrating the work of Lucian Freud.

Since May, 86 per cent of this art exhibition's visitors came to Titanic Belfast specifically to see Lucian Freud's Etchings: A Creative Collaboration which includes over 60 of the renowned artist's famous etchings as well as a unique immersive experience created by the world-famous attraction.

In this time, it has attracted visitors from around the world including America, Australia, China, Canada, Germany, Poland and Spain.

Artwork featured in the exhibition includes Bella in Her Pluto T-Shirt (1995) with Freud capturing his daughter in wearing a t-shirt that carries deeper layers of personal significance; one of his most ambitious etched pieces, Self-Portrait: Reflection (Cancelled Self-Portrait) (1996) offering a

haunting and unflinching examination of himself in later life and Donegal Man (2007) – which has a special connection to Titanic Belfast as the sitter was Pat Doherty, the visitor attraction's Chairman.

As part of the exhibition, Titanic Belfast has crafted a recreation of Freud's Kensington studio, offering an intimate glimpse into the space he worked that became a living artwork itself with his iconic bundles of rags, collected to clean his brushes – a testament to his obsessive devotion to his craft.

Lucian Freud's Etchings: A Creative Collaboration is a free, non-ticketed exhibition running until Tuesday 30th September in the Andrews Gallery on Level 2 of Titanic Belfast. For further information go to www.titanicbelfast.com

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BEAUTY VOLUNTEERS HELP ULSTER HOSPITAL CANCER PATIENTS FIND THEIR SPARKLE AGAIN

Cancer treatment can take its toll, not just physically but emotionally, affecting how people feel about themselves.

Now, patients in the Macmillan Cancer Unit at the Ulster Hospital are regaining confidence and a sense of self, thanks to Look Good Feel Better workshops that offer expert advice on skincare, make-up, hand and nail care, hair loss, scalp care, new hair growth, headwear, wigs, brows, lashes and body

confidence.

The South Eastern Trust, in partnership with Look Good Feel Better, a national charity supporting the physical and emotional well-being of people living with cancer, provides free online and in-person sessions in the Unit.

Led by trained Volunteers, each group

session offers not only practical beauty tips but also a safe space to chat with others going through similar experiences. Every participant receives a bag filled with makeup and skincare products to take home.

Susan Thompson, who recently attended a session, described it as "amazing" and "cheering." She said, "It really does lift you. Janet, Michelle and Brooklynn were terrific. They helped me with my eyebrows and eyelashes, things I have not seen in a while!"

"These workshops are so important. They help

build your confidence and make you feel better about yourself. The bag of goodies is terrific, but it is also about how much better you feel afterwards. I would highly recommend it."

Macmillan Health & Wellbeing Co-Ordinator, Karen Kelly emphasised the unique impact of the sessions and stated, "The workshops allow women affected by cancer to meet others who truly understand what they are going through. It is uplifting, it makes them feel like themselves again and reminds them they are not alone. The camaraderie and shared

experiences are just as valuable as the beauty tips." For Look Good Feel Better Volunteer, Michelle Kerr, the work is deeply personal. Michelle commented, "I have been volunteering with Look Good Feel Better for 10 years. My mum came to one of the workshops when she was diagnosed with cancer and left feeling amazing. For many women, it is the first time in a long while that they have worn make-up or felt confident without their wig. You can see their mood lift right in front of you."

Janet Houston Potts, who is also a Volunteer,

has been part of Look Good Feel Better for 25 years, added, "We certainly help people look better, but it is about how they feel afterwards. Many make friends, exchange phone numbers and leave with a smile. That is why I love being part of it."

Patients can book a place at the workshops through the Macmillan Health and Wellbeing Service based in the Ulster Hospital Macmillan Unit.

For more information on Look Good Feel Better workshops, visit www.lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk.



Michelle Kerr with patient Emilia Kucharska

Lyons announces £2.5m for Homeless Prevention services

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has announced an additional £2.5 million funding package for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to boost homeless prevention services.

Minister Lyons highlighted the funding during a visit to the final training session for the national teams taking part in the Homeless World Cup in Oslo at the end of August.

Meeting the teams, Minister Lyons praised the work of Street NI, a local charity which aims to positively impact disadvantaged groups

through football. The Minister said: "My ambition is the prevention of homelessness and charities like Street NI are key to this goal. The stories I have heard today have been truly inspiring and highlight the continued need to support those in crisis, while working on innovative ways to prevent homelessness."

"Street NI has provided the players with the opportunity to represent their country in an international tournament, as well as an intensive wraparound support

service, helping them transform their lives. This additional funding will continue to encourage new thinking in our approach to homelessness and further support NIHE's partners in delivering critical services for people who are homeless."

"I congratulate everyone on being selected and I wish them every success in Oslo and for their futures."

Every year, the Homeless World Cup Foundation delivers a week-long football tournament that brings together 500 players representing 48 countries

from around the world, all of whom have faced homelessness and social marginalisation.

Northern Ireland will be represented by both a male and female team who will compete in a purpose-built arena in the heart of the host city.

Justin McMinn, CEO and co-founder of Street Soccer Northern Ireland, said: "This is a dream come true for all the players, a chance to represent your country in a sport that you love. Over the last 12 years we have witnessed the

impact this event has on the players, with many of them breaking out of homelessness and unemployment on their return. They will come back full of confidence and motivation to make positive changes in their lives."

Louise McConnell is attending the tournament as a mentor for the women's team this year, having represented Northern Ireland last year. She highlighted how beneficial the experience has been, saying: "Playing in the Homeless World

Cup in South Korea last year was one of the best experiences of my life and it was a proud moment for me to captain the side. This year I get to go back as a coach mentor to help other people on their journeys and pass on my knowledge and experience. Street NI has made a massive difference in my life and now I want to help the charity make a difference to others."

Alongside football, Street NI offers support with housing, employment, education, addictions and mental health issues.

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Continued from page 1

Dozens of venues are putting on events at Culture Night Belfast, alongside Translink and the city's three BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) - Linen Quarter, Cathedral Quarter and Belfast One - as well as independent event and hospitality

providers, heritage buildings and council venues, including City Hall, 2 Royal Avenue and the Belfast Stories building at the junction of North Street and Royal Avenue.

A full timetable of activities is available at culturenight.ie/belfast and follow the new Culture Night Belfast social media channels on Facebook at [@culturenightbel](https://www.facebook.com/culturenightbel) and Instagram at [@culturenightbelfast](https://www.instagram.com/culturenightbelfast) for all the latest updates.

Special Culture Night 'Hubs' will be located at 2 Royal Avenue and The MAC, where quiet spaces will also be

available.

Similar spaces will be provided at Belfast Waterfront and Commission House at 18-22 Gordon Street, Cathedral Quarter. Changing Places facilities are located at Belfast Waterfront, Crescent Arts Centre and Ulster University. Accessibility information for all participating venues is also available from accessible.co.uk

Visitors are encouraged to hop on a Belfast Bike to travel to and from Culture Night events or use Translink Metro or Glider services, with timetable info available at translink.co.uk

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Belfast's green spaces shine with 23 Green Flag Awards

Belfast City Council is celebrating after 23 of its much-loved parks and open spaces have been recognised with prestigious Green Flag Awards, an internationally recognised mark of excellence for well-managed green spaces.

The announcement was made at the annual Green Flag Awards ceremony at Bangor Castle Walled Garden, where 118 sites across Northern Ireland were honoured this year.

Belfast's winners include iconic destinations such as Botanic Gardens, Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, Cavehill Country Park and Ormeau Park, as well as community favourites like Falls Park, Drumglass Park, Grove Park and Springfield Dam. Botanic Gardens was also recognised with a Heritage Award for excellence in the care of its historic features.

The Green Flag Award scheme celebrates the vital social and environmental value that parks bring to our communities – from boosting health and wellbeing to protecting biodiversity. The awards are an important reminder that Belfast's green spaces are free, open and accessible to everyone all year round.

Councillor Ruth Brooks, Chair of People and Communities Committee, said:



"We're incredibly proud that so many of our parks and open spaces have been recognised with Green Flag status this year. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff, volunteers and community partners who care for these spaces and keep them welcoming for everyone. Belfast's parks are not just beautiful places – they are vital for health, wellbeing, biodiversity and community connection. These awards show that we're delivering world-class green spaces for our

residents and visitors." The Green Flag Award, run locally by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, sets international standards for park management and encourages the sharing of best practice across the world. Since the programme's launch in Northern Ireland in 2008, demand for the award has grown year on year. Belfast City Council's 2025 Green Flag Award winners are: Barnett Demesne; Belfast Botanic Gardens (Heritage); Belmont Park; Cavehill Country Park;

Connswater Community Greenway; Drumglass Park; Dunmurry Village; Dunville Park; Falls Park; Fullerton Park; Grove Park; Half Moon Lake; Knocknagoney Park; Lagan Meadows; Musgrave Park; Pairc Nua Chollan; Ormeau Park; Roselawn Cemetery; Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park; Tullycarnet Park; Waterworks Park; Woodvale Park; Springfield Dam. For more information on the Green Flag Awards, visit: <https://www.KeepNorthernIrelandBeautiful.org>

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OUR ACTIVITIES ARE BACK FOR NEW TERM!

Boys Brigade– Badminton Club BB starts back on Thursday night 4th September, as a registration evening from 7pm to 8pm. It resumes formally on 11th September with Anchor Boys (6.30pm) and Junior Section (7.15pm) only Badminton Club runs every Tuesday from 7.30pm

123 Lunch Club

The 1-2-3 Club is a monthly lunch club that runs on the 2nd Tuesday at 1pm. 2 Courses (plus tea) for £3 The first lunch of the season is on 9th September.

For more details see our new website www.strandpresbyterian.org.uk

Looking for a Primary School?

We would love to welcome you to Leadhill Primary School. We have a range of ways to provide you with the information you need:

Visit our school website.

Arrange to take a tour of the school. Visits can be arranged by appointment throughout the year

Make an appointment to meet with the Principal.

Take part in our Toddle Time group each Wednesday from 9 -11am.

Find out about our Wrap-Around childcare solutions.

Find out about our Pre-School Playgroup for children from 2 years and 10 months.

Speak to the Principal about our SEN provision in our new unit for children with Severe Learning Difficulties.

'Children are offered a range of opportunities to shine, which highlights all children's gifts. Leadhill is a great family school.'

(Parent comment)

Limited spaces available in playgroup and P1-7

Visit our school website for further information. Casaldona Park, Belfast, BT6 9RD Tel: 028 90401101 www.leadhillps.com

TURNING OLD INTO GOLD: HOW ROBINSON GOLDSMITHS ARE REDESIGNING HEIRLOOMS SUSTAINABLY

What do you do with a broken chain that belonged to your mum? Or a gold ring that's not your style but holds a lifetime of family stories?



Jennifer and Gillian Robinson Goldsmiths.

At Robinson Goldsmiths in Bangor, the answer is simple: melt it down and begin again without losing what matters.

This isn't just recycling. It's memory-making, reborn.

In their family-run workshop, old jewellery is given a second life through a thoughtful and skilled process. The gold is melted down - a mesmerising sight - not to erase its past, but to prepare it for a new chapter.

"Working with customers to design and create unique jewellery is a real privilege," says Jennifer Robinson, partner at Robinson Goldsmiths. "Often, inherited jewellery is just sitting in a box somewhere, unseen and unused, as it's not the right style or size. By using these items to create something new, the customer gets a

custom piece of jewellery which is all the more special knowing the history behind it."

Once molten, the gold is poured into a mould, cooled, then carefully rolled, shaped, and crafted into something entirely fresh.

Whether it becomes a sleek new ring, a modern pendant, or a bespoke design co-created with the team, each piece is reimagined but still deeply rooted in your story.

"Over the years we've turned broken and unloved jewellery into rings, necklaces and brooches," adds Gillian Robinson, shop manager. "These pieces are lovingly designed and created in our workshop from our family to another. By reusing these precious metals and stones, we're also offering



a sustainable option for eco-conscious shoppers."

This is sustainable jewellery at its most meaningful: no new mining, no waste just precious materials already rich with history, transformed into

something you'll wear every day and perhaps pass on one day yourself.

So if there's old gold tucked away in a drawer, maybe it's time to bring it in, melt it down, and start a new chapter.



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LOVE IN ACTION BY SENIOR CITIZENS

‘Loving Hands’ Knitting Group (Dundonald Methodist Church) finished another very successful year by having an Annual Outing to Coleman’s Garden Centre on 28th May, 2025.

The group look forward to the Annual Outing each year and this year was no exception. The Knitting/Crochet group have been meeting for the past 14 years and have knitted/crocheted hundreds of baby hats, cardigans, blankets, twiddlemuffs, scarfs, gloves, beanies and many more items. Some requests are made but the majority are donated to those who are in need both here in Belfast and overseas. Presently, knitted hats, scarfs, gloves etc. are being knit to send overseas for Christmas presents for those who receive nothing for Christmas and it is such a joy to see how they are received by both children and adults. The Group meet fortnightly, Wednesdays 2.00pm-4.00pm. It is a Group of approximately 26 members, mainly



senior citizens, who have great fellowship and enjoy one another’s company. A number of the members came on their own and have made many friends. Members travel from Comber, East Belfast and the surrounding area. If you live alone, or perhaps would like to meet new friends, you will be made very welcome by this group. You don’t have to be a great knitter and patterns, knitting needles and wool are supplied FREE OF CHARGE. Also, refreshments are supplied at each meeting. So, if you are interested in joining, please come along to Dundonald Methodist Church Hall, Islay Gardens, Dundonald, Belfast BT16 2WY on Wednesday, 10th September, 2025, 2.00pm-4.00pm and A VERY WARM WELCOME AWAITS YOU.

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IT'S TODDLE TIME AT LEADHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

The staff in Leadhill Primary School are excited to welcome in the new school year.

We are always excited to meet new children as they start in our playgroup, unit and primary school classes, but it is especially enjoyable to meet the babies and toddlers who are the youngest members of our Leadhill family. Our

Toddle Time group meets on Wednesdays during term time from 9-11am. Babies and toddlers attend alongside their adults, enjoying playtime, chat and refreshments together. The group provides a great opportunity for children



and adults alike to make connections and friendships. Parents, Grandparents, Childminders and friends – all are welcome in Toddle Time!

The team would love to welcome new members to our Toddle Time group this year! Just pop in on a Wednesday morning and you can be sure of a warm welcome.

Toddle Time is one of the ways that Leadhill provides for families in the local

community. Leadhill supports families with provision of affordable and flexible childcare

and a pre-school playgroup for children from 2 years and 10 months.

If you would like to know more about Leadhill Primary School, the new Special Educational Needs Unit, Toddle Time, Pre-school Playgroup or Wrap-Around Care, please visit our website on www.leadhillps.com.

Leadhill would love to welcome you for a visit. Contact the school office on 028 90401101 or email Mrs Millis on amillis370@c2kni.net to arrange for a suitable date and time.

Discover 'Mourne Living' at House of Vic-Ryn, Lisburn

We're delighted to announce the opening of Mourne Living, our brand-new furniture store at the House of Vic-Ryn, Lisburn recently.

Mourne Living has been created with one simple aim: to bring stylish, high-quality furniture to local homes at accessible prices.

Whether you're searching for a statement sofa, a practical dining set, or the finishing touches to complete a room, you'll find inspiration around every corner.

We're proud to be part of the Lisburn community

and excited to welcome our first customers through the doors. Our friendly team will be on hand to offer advice, inspiration, and guidance to help you find the perfect pieces for your home.

And with the award-winning Cafe Vic-Ryn right next door, it's the perfect place to make a day of it: shop for your home, then enjoy a well-deserved coffee and bite to eat.



East Belfast SureStart connecting with local families

"At East Belfast Sure Start, we recognise the importance of supporting every child to reach their potential and know that all children have different experiences and develop at different rates.

Our approach allows children to be curious, follow their own interests, and build upon ideas at their own pace.

Our 'home from home' environments are warm, nurturing and encourage curiosity, awe and wonder. Our spaces are calm, tranquil and provide children with lots of play and learning opportunities.

We recognise that parents/ carers are the most important people in their child's life. They are their first teachers. We work

alongside families to support children both at home and in our settings. Every adult that is present in a child's early years has the potential to achieve the best outcomes for children.

We have groups for parents to be, new babies and toddlers alongside a range of sessions for parents/ carers. All of our services encourage connections with other, nurture the health and wellbeing of you and your family and promote rich play and learning opportunities.



It takes a village to raise a child and at East Belfast Sure Start we feel privileged

to be part of that village." Tracey Ripley McElvogue – Coordinator

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Connecting with Local Families

We welcome families with children aged 0-4 years.

All our services:

- Encourage connections with others, both friendships and local services
- Nurture the health and wellbeing of you and your family
- Promote rich play and learning opportunities

Services are available to families living in the following areas:



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Specsavers Connswater encourages parents to prioritise children's eye health as the new school year begins

Local experts at Specsavers Connswater are reminding parents not to forget about getting their children's eyes tested as the new school year begins.

With 80% of learning done through sight in a child's early years, undiagnosed vision problems can often lead to difficulties in reading, writing, and in some cases behaviour. A simple, quick, and NHS-funded eye test at Specsavers can help identify and address any issues.

Paula Cunningham, ophthalmic director at Specsavers Connswater says: "Good eyesight is vital for a child's learning, confidence and development, yet many children don't know they could be having issues with their vision.

"We believe getting your child an eye test at the start of the school year is vital, and it is timely to remind parents that children up to 16 years old can avail of a NHS funded eye test and a



second pair of glasses from

just £10* at Specsavers
 "Back to school is a busy time but making sure your child's vision is in top shape can make a huge difference. Our goal as a locally owned and run business is to help every child in the local area

see clearly and comfortably
this school year!"

Children visiting Specsavers for an eye test can also now enjoy a fully interactive experience, thanks to new sticker books which take them through the entire process, from

arrival to getting their frames fitted.

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Communities Minister announces £3.3m for Housing Rights

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has today announced a three-year £3.3 million funding package for Housing Rights.

Minister Lyons made the announcement during a visit to Housing Rights in East Belfast to meet the Board and staff and hear first-hand how the charity helps households deal with housing and homelessness problems.

During the visit, Minister Lyons praised the work of those combating homelessness.

The Minister said: "I have made it clear that addressing homelessness and increasing the supply of housing are amongst my top priorities. This three-year funding package will support the delivery of valuable services, helping those who need it most. I welcome the opportunity to hear more about the work of Housing Rights and how their guidance, advice and support has helped people right across Northern Ireland."

“I also recognise the valuable training on housing issues Housing Rights provides for the

wider advice sector; it is vitally important that people in crisis have access to accurate advice and timely support. The collaborative work of Housing Rights and the organisations and individuals working with homeless people is critical if we are to prevent the risk of homelessness and continue to support people who need help in our society."

Kate McCauley,
Housing Rights CEO,

welcomed the Minister's support and said: "Housing Rights' vision to ensure everyone has a home is strengthened with support from a range of funders and partners across government and civil society. Despite our collective efforts, too many people still wait too long for a home to meet their family's needs. Our work to deliver independent, quality, specialist housing advice across Northern Ireland

has therefore never been more needed. We are delighted to host the Minister's visit to our offices to mark a further three years of support for our services from his Department."

Housing Rights has a dedicated service telephone number on 028 9024 5640 for Housing Rights Advice. Information can also be found at www.housingrights.org.uk/housing-advice.

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IMAGO

IMAGO OASIS Caring in Action provide a mental health and befriending service. This service helps adults who have mild to moderate mental ill health to understand and cope with life by offering practical one to one structured weekly support.



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OCIA's new youth development programme aimed at building confidence, resilience and self-esteem, whilst focussing on improving mental health and building life skills.



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THE FIERY TRANSFORMATION: WHY AUTUMN LEAVES CHANGE COLOUR

As summer's verdant embrace loosens its grip, a spectacular transformation sweeps across our landscapes.

The lush greens of trees give way to a breathtaking palette of fiery reds, brilliant oranges, sunny yellows, and deep purples. This annual display, a hallmark of autumn, isn't just a pretty show; it's a fascinating natural process driven by biochemistry and the changing seasons.

The Science Behind the Spectacle:

The primary player in the green of summer leaves is chlorophyll, the pigment essential for photosynthesis. Throughout the warmer months, trees are busily converting sunlight into energy, and chlorophyll efficiently absorbs light in the red and blue spectrums, reflecting green, which is what we see.

However, as days shorten and temperatures drop in autumn, trees

begin to prepare for winter dormancy. This preparation involves a gradual shutdown of photosynthesis.

With less sunlight and colder conditions, the production of chlorophyll slows down and eventually stops. The existing chlorophyll then starts to break down, revealing other pigments that have been present in the leaves all along, but were previously masked by the dominant green.

These "hidden" pigments are:

- **Carotenoids:** These are responsible for the vibrant yellows and oranges. Carotenoids are present in leaves year-round but become visible once the chlorophyll degrades. They are also found in carrots, corn, and bananas.

- **Anthocyanins:**

These pigments produce the striking reds, purples, and even some deep blues. Unlike carotenoids, anthocyanins are not present in the leaves throughout the summer. They are actively produced in the autumn, particularly when there are warm, sunny days followed by cool, crisp nights (but not freezing). Sugars trapped in the leaves by cool temperatures and bright sunlight contribute to their formation. The specific hue of red or purple can depend on the acidity of the leaf's sap.

The combination and concentration of these pigments, along with environmental factors, determine the precise colour we see. Some trees, like maples and oaks, are renowned for

their spectacular reds and oranges due to their ability to produce abundant anthocyanins. Others, like birches and aspens, typically showcase brilliant yellows from their carotenoids.

A Last Hurrah Before Winter:

The shedding of leaves in autumn is a vital survival mechanism for deciduous trees. By dropping their leaves, trees reduce water loss during the colder, drier winter months when water can be scarce or frozen. It also helps them shed accumulated waste products. The stunning display of colour is a beautiful, albeit temporary, farewell to the growing season, preparing the tree for a period of rest before the cycle begins anew in spring.

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An award-winning service offering hassle-free travel, HANNON Coach & Sail is ideal for a city break in Glasgow and the perfect antidote to flying and airport stress! Already hugely popular with those in the know, the Belfast – Glasgow Express Coach Service is rated 5-Star on TripAdvisor.

A shopper's paradise, Glasgow is recognised as having the best retail therapy in the UK outside of London. Consistently voted 'top of the shops', the city is Scotland's premier shopping destination.

Not just shopping, Glasgow is also famous for its fantastic nightlife, and great choice of restaurants and bars. Glasgow is the perfect choice for your next city break away.

With a simple flat fare of £47 which includes the cost of the ferry and your bag, the Belfast – Glasgow Express offers a really attractive, convenient and low-cost alternative to flying.

The service is operated by HANNON Coach and leaves twice a day from Belfast, Grand Central Station (Stand 18) and drops visitors right in the heart of Glasgow's 'Style Mile'. The simple flat fare allows passengers to pick and mix dates and times of travel to suit and with no luggage charges it makes a perfect travel option for a shopping trip. There are also a great range of hotels just minutes from Glasgow Buchanan Bus Station.

Company director Aodh Hannon says people seem to really love the convenience of



the service as we take you right into the heart of the city centre.

"People love the fact that it's so hassle-free compared to flying, no airport transfers and with no extra charge for luggage it is a massive help with keeping the cost of a break down."

said Mr Hannon.

The service can be booked online at www.hannoncoach.com up to 1 hour before departure or by phone using the very friendly telephone booking service.

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HALLOWEEN IS COMING ...

With its rich folklore and stunning landscapes, Northern Ireland is the perfect place to embrace the autumn season with your family.

The cooler, crisp weather and changing colours create an ideal atmosphere for outdoor adventures,

spooky fun, and celebrating the harvest. From picking your own pumpkins to navigating a

corn maze, here's a guide to some of the best family-friendly autumn activities across Northern Ireland.

Pumpkin Patches and Halloween Fun!

Picking your own pumpkin has become a cherished autumn tradition for many families. These events often offer more than just a chance to find the perfect gourd; they also include fun activities like spooky trails and face painting.

Mountpanther Farm Park in County Down hosts a large Halloween event with a pumpkin patch where you can pick and have your pumpkin carved. They also have a spooky trail and other surprises.

Streamvale Open Farm, located just outside Belfast, is well-known for its pumpkin patch experience, which includes a “Broomtastic Disco” and a haunted house.

The Ark Open Farm in Newtownards also opens its pumpkin patch for the spooky season, often featuring a Halloween trail and marshmallow toasting.

Northern Ireland, particularly County Armagh, is famous for its Bramley apples, which have PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) status. While traditional “pick-your-own” apple

farms are not common, you can still celebrate the apple harvest at various events and farms.

Look for orchard tours and tasting experiences at places like Long Meadow Cider in Portadown.

These visits often give families a chance to learn about the history of apple growing, see the orchards, and sometimes even taste the freshest apples right from the tree.

For those looking for a bigger spectacle, Northern Ireland has some fantastic Halloween festivals.

Derry Halloween is



arguably Europe's largest Halloween festival, a multi-day event that transforms the city into a hub of spooky celebration. It's a fantastic experience with a large carnival parade, fireworks, and a

“Awakening the Walled City” trail that’s suitable for families.

Smaller, local events in cities like Newry also offer family-friendly fun with street carnivals, craft caves, and spooky discos.



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Celebrating 30 Years: Buchanan Johnston Flynn Limited Continues to Provide Independent Financial Advice

Buchanan Johnston Flynn Limited, a long-established financial advice firm based in Belfast, is proudly celebrating 30 years in business this year.

The company was founded in 1995 by Grant Buchanan and Iain Johnston with the goal of providing comprehensive and straightforward financial advice to clients.

A Foundation Built on Integrity

The firm's primary aim is to handle each client's business with integrity, treating it as if it were their own. This ethos, combined with a commitment to clear communication, has been the cornerstone of their success over the past three decades.

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Buchanan Johnston Flynn Limited offers a full range of independent financial advice services to private individuals, business owners, and limited companies across Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Their areas of expertise include:

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A Dedicated Team

The experienced team at Buchanan Johnston Flynn Limited, which includes directors Grant Buchanan and Iain Johnston, is dedicated to providing a high standard of service. They are committed to working closely with clients to understand their objectives and create bespoke financial plans.



Are you claiming financial support towards childcare for school aged children?

Working parents can get help with wraparound childcare costs for older children.

Employers For Childcare

Many working parents find it challenging to manage and afford childcare for children who are at school. Organising the morning drop-off and the afternoon pick-ups, and the childcare required to allow parents to be in work on time in the mornings and also be able to work into the late afternoon. This is often referred to as 'wraparound' childcare as it wraps around the school day.

In addition, there is the added complication of childcare that is required when schools are closed, whether for the weeks of school holidays or for those one-off days of closure that happen during each term, as well as perhaps having other younger or older children requiring a different form of childcare.

Find out what financial support is available

Many parents don't realise that there is help available with the cost of registered childcare for older children. This can include some wraparound childcare such as breakfast or after school clubs, as well as registered childminders and day nurseries. Parents may be paying a number of different providers to meet their childcare requirements and may be able to get financial support through Universal Credit, Childcare Vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare plus the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme to help meet their bills. Eligible parents can claim support through any of these schemes for children under the age of 12, however for older children below the age of 16 only Universal Credit and Childcare Vouchers offer support, unless the child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

Finding suitable childcare

The Family Support NI website www.familysupportni.gov.uk is a useful resource for families looking for registered childcare and includes a search function for all registered childcare providers across Northern Ireland. This includes some breakfast and after-school clubs and also information on day nurseries and childminders who offer transport to and from school. It's worth speaking to your local primary school to see what childcare it may offer and whether it accepts Tax-Free Childcare, the NI Childcare Subsidy Scheme or Childcare Vouchers as forms of payment.

Further information

To find out more about what financial support you are entitled to towards childcare, contact Employers For Childcare's Family Benefits Advice Service on 028 9267 8200 or email hello@employersforchildcare.org.



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Adrian Margey, the Portrush-based artist known for his vibrant, contemporary landscape works, will be hosting an exclusive exhibition and sale at the luxurious Culloden Estate & Spa from Friday, 24th October to Sunday, 26th October.

This highly anticipated annual event will feature Margey's latest collection, which captures the breathtaking beauty of North Down, the Ards Peninsula, the Mourne, the North Coast, Belfast, and Donegal. Margey, whose work has been gaining recognition both locally and internationally, exhibited in Washington DC in 2022 and was invited to live-

paint at the 'Experience Ireland' showcase in Milan last spring. His reputation continues to grow, making this exhibition an exciting opportunity for collectors and art enthusiasts alike.

While Margey holds a PhD from Queen's University Belfast, he is a self-taught artist whose distinctive style draws inspiration from the Fauves, Irish Impressionists, and the

indigenous artists of South America. His signature approach blends bold, kaleidoscopic colours with sweeping brushstrokes and expressive knife work, creating pieces that are both dynamic and emotive. His more impressionistic works, which emphasize naturalistic colour schemes, are also increasingly sought after.

This year's exhibition will spotlight a stunning range of large and small works, each reflecting Adrian Margey's distinctive style and use of colour. A special focus will be placed on Belfast's iconic landmarks, including the historic Harland and Wolff cranes, the Titanic Quarter, Ulster Hall and Strand Cinema. Alongside these, there will be breathtaking depictions of the North Coast, Mourne and Donegal. Striking portrayals

of Strangford Lough, Scrabo Tower and Mount Stewart as well as serene scenes from North Down, such as Kinnegar Pier, Seapark, Crawfordsburn and Bangor Marina will bring a very local flavour to this must-see exhibition.

Margey's commission diary is now open for the festive season, and visitors will have the chance to discuss bespoke pieces directly with the artist during the exhibition.

The exhibition will run from 11 am to 9 pm on Friday, 24th October and Saturday, 25th October, with final viewing on Sunday, 26th October from 11 am to 6 pm. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome. For more details, please visit www.adrianmargey.com or contact the Portrush studio at 07841593762.



Artist Adrian Margey photographed ahead of his Solo Exhibition at Culloden Estate & Spa: Friday 24th until Sunday 26th October.



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Planning Your Perfect Autumn Getaway

As the vibrant greens of summer begin to mellow into a kaleidoscope of fiery reds, rustic oranges, and golden yellows, Northern Ireland transforms into an enchanting autumn wonderland.

With crisp air, fewer crowds, and a magical quality to the light, it's an ideal time to explore its dramatic coastlines, ancient landscapes, and charming cities. If you're dreaming of a cozy and captivating escape, here's how to plan your perfect autumn getaway in Northern Ireland.

Beyond the breathtaking foliage, autumn offers several advantages for visitors:

- **Stunning Scenery:** From the Sperrin Mountains to the Glens of Antrim, the natural landscapes are ablaze with

colour, offering incredible photographic opportunities.

- **Fewer Crowds:** Popular attractions, while still accessible, are generally less busy than in the peak summer months, allowing for a more relaxed experience.

- **Cozy Vibes:** Think roaring fires in traditional pubs, hearty local food, and a sense of warmth and welcome that perfectly complements the cooler weather.

- **Harvest Festivals & Events:** Many towns and villages host harvest festivals, food events,

and cultural gatherings throughout the autumn, offering a taste of local life.

Northern Ireland might be compact, but it's packed with diverse regions, each offering unique autumn experience.

- **The Causeway Coast & Glens:** This iconic stretch of coastline is spectacular at any time of year, but autumn adds an extra layer of drama.

- **Giant's Causeway:** Witness the hexagonal basalt columns against a backdrop of autumnal hues and crashing waves.

- **Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge:** The walk to the bridge offers stunning coastal views, made even more vibrant by the changing leaves.

- **Dark Hedges:** Famous from Game of Thrones, these intertwined beech trees are particularly atmospheric in autumn, especially with morning mist or a golden sunset.

- **Glenariff Forest Park:** Known as the "Queen of the Glens," its waterfalls and walking trails are magnificent amidst the autumnal colours.

The Mourne Mountains: For hikers and nature lovers, the Mourne are a must-visit.

- **Walking Trails:** Explore the numerous trails, from gentle rambles to challenging ascents, all offering panoramic views of the golden landscape and coastline.

- **Tollymore Forest Park:** A truly magical spot with ancient trees, follies, and the Shimna River, all bathed in autumn's glow.

Fermanagh Lakelands: Discover a serene landscape of shimmering loughs and ancient islands.

- **Lough Erne:** Take a boat trip to explore monastic sites like Devenish Island, surrounded by the peaceful autumn scenery.

- **Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark:** While underground, the surrounding landscape of Cuilcagh Mountain is stunning for autumnal walks.

Belfast & Derry/Londonderry: These vibrant cities offer a blend of history, culture, and excellent food.



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UNEARTHING HALLOWEEN’S HIDDEN TRADITIONS

Halloween, with its spooky costumes, pumpkin carving, and quest for sugary treats, feels like a holiday we all know.

But beyond the familiar rituals, a world of lesser-known traditions, steeped in history and folklore, awaits discovery. This year, why not delve deeper into the past and unearth some of these fascinating, forgotten, or simply unusual Halloween customs?

Snap-Apple (Ireland & Scotland)

Forget bobbing for apples in a bowl of water – imagine them dangling from a string! This lively tradition, particularly popular in Ireland and Scotland, involves apples and sometimes treacle-covered baps (bread rolls) tied to strings. Participants, with hands clasped behind their backs, must try to take a bite. It’s a messy, competitive, and utterly hilarious way to celebrate! The origins are thought to be linked to ancient harvest festivals and divinatory games, where the first to bite into the apple might be the first to marry.

Souling (England)

Long before “trick or treat,” there was “souling.” Dating back to medieval times in parts of England, especially the North and West Midlands, poor folk and sometimes children would go from door to door on All Hallows’ Eve, singing and praying for the souls of the dead. In return, they would receive “soul cakes” – small, round cakes often spiced with nutmeg, ginger, or cinnamon. This beautiful tradition was a charitable act, offering comfort to the living and prayers for the departed.

Dumb Supper (Various Cultures)

For those seeking a more introspective and spiritual Halloween, the “dumb supper” is a captivating tradition. Performed in silence (hence “dumb”), participants set an extra place at the table for the spirits of their ancestors. Food is served, and no one speaks, creating an atmosphere of reverence and communion with the other side. The idea is to honour and remember those who have passed, and some believe it can even provide glimpses into the future.

Nut Cracking and **Fortune Telling** (Celtic Traditions)

Many ancient Celtic Halloween customs revolved around divination, particularly concerning love and marriage. One such tradition involved nuts. Couples would place two nuts on a fire – if they burned steadily together, it signified a harmonious future.

If they hissed and popped apart, it suggested a more tumultuous path. Another variation involved throwing nuts into a fire and making a wish; the way they burned or burst was thought to indicate the wish’s success.

Carving Turnips, Not Pumpkins (Ireland & Scotland)

While the pumpkin is now king, its predecessor in Halloween carving was the humble turnip.

When Irish and Scottish immigrants brought their Halloween traditions to America, they found pumpkins to be far more abundant and easier to carve. But originally, terrifying faces were etched into turnips and potatoes, lit from within by candles, to ward off mischievous spirits and “Stingy Jack.” It’s a reminder of Halloween’s protective, rather than purely playful, origins.





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EMBRACING OUTDOOR WORKOUTS IN COOLER WEATHER

As the days get shorter and the air turns crisp, it's easy to retreat indoors and let your fitness routine hibernate for the winter.

But autumn is a fantastic season for outdoor exercise. The cooler temperatures can make high-intensity workouts more comfortable, and the beautiful scenery—think vibrant changing leaves and golden sunlight—provides a refreshing backdrop that can boost your mood and motivation.

The Benefits of Exercising Outdoors in Autumn

Working out in the autumn air offers unique advantages. The cooler climate helps your body regulate its temperature more efficiently, which can improve endurance and

prevent overheating during intense sessions. A brisk autumn walk or run can feel invigorating, and the natural light exposure can help combat seasonal mood changes. The changing landscape also provides a visual feast that makes your workout feel less like a chore and more like an enjoyable experience.

Tips for Staying Safe and Comfortable

To make the most of your outdoor autumn workouts, a little preparation goes a long way.

• **Dress in Layers:** This is the golden rule of cold-weather exercise. Start with a



moisture-wicking base layer to draw sweat away from your skin, a middle layer for insulation (like a fleece

or wool), and a wind-resistant or waterproof outer layer. As you warm up, you can shed layers.

• **Protect Your Extremities:** Your hands, feet, and ears are most susceptible to the cold. Wear gloves

or mittens, thermal socks, and a hat or ear warmers.

• **Stay Hydrated:** Just because it's cooler doesn't mean you don't need to drink water. You can still become dehydrated, so carry a water bottle with you.

• **Choose the Right Footwear:** As the ground may be wet or covered in leaves, opt for shoes with good traction.

If you're running, consider trail shoes for better grip.

• **Mind the Daylight:** With earlier sunsets, it's crucial to be visible. Wear bright or reflective clothing, and consider a headlamp if you'll be out around

dusk or dawn.

Inspiring Autumn Workout Ideas

Don't be limited to your usual routine. Autumn is the perfect time to try something new.

• **Trail Running or Hiking:** Take to local trails and immerse yourself in the changing colours. The varied terrain will challenge different muscle groups and keep things interesting.

• **Outdoor Yoga:** Find a secluded spot in a park and practice your yoga flow surrounded by nature. The serene environment can enhance your sense of calm.

• **Raking Leaves (A Fun Challenge):** Turn a chore into a workout! Raking leaves is great for your core, arms, and shoulders.

For an extra cardio boost, jump into the piles you create with your family or friends.

• **Bodyweight Circuits:** Use a park bench for incline push-ups or step-ups, a tree for support during lunges, or find an open field for sprints. The world is your gym!

By embracing the beauty and challenges of the season, you can make autumn a time of fitness growth and renewed appreciation for the great outdoors.

Hay Fever in the Autumn Season: A Surprising Allergy Challenge

When most people think of hay fever, springtime often comes to mind—blossoming trees, blooming flowers, and clouds of pollen.

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But for many allergy sufferers, autumn brings its own set of challenges. Hay fever in the autumn season is real, and it's often triggered by a different culprit: weed pollen and mould spores.

Unlike spring and summer, when tree and grass pollen dominate, autumn allergies are typically caused by ragweed, mugwort, and other late-blooming weeds. These plants release pollen into the air from late

August through October, especially in dry, windy conditions. In the UK, weed pollen levels can remain high well into September and October, making autumn a difficult time for those sensitive to these allergens.

Managing hay fever in autumn requires a slightly different approach. Here are a few tips:

- Keep windows closed during high pollen days and use air purifiers indoors.
- Clear fallen leaves from gardens and gutters to reduce mould buildup.
- Change clothes and shower after spending time outdoors to remove pollen and spores.
- Use antihistamines or nasal sprays as recommended by your doctor.

Though autumn hay fever is less talked about, it can be just as disruptive as its spring counterpart. By understanding the seasonal triggers and taking proactive steps, you can enjoy the crisp air and golden leaves without the sniffles.

Ballyness Caravan Park: Voted Best in NI and Still Leading the Way

Ballyness Caravan Park in Bushmills, Northern Ireland, continues to set the standard for excellence in the UK's caravan and camping industry.

Following last year's accolade as the Best Caravan Park in the UK in the Practical Caravan and Practical Motorhome Top 100 Sites Guide 2024, the park remains firmly at the top of its game. For 2025, Ballyness has once again been named Best Campsite in Northern Ireland for the fifth consecutive year and retains its listing as a Premier Park—a distinction awarded to the top-rated sites across the UK.

With a legacy now spanning 25 years, Ballyness has long been regarded as one of Ireland's most awarded and celebrated parks. Its ongoing honours include being one of the very few AA 5 Gold Pennant caravan parks in Northern Ireland, and holding the prestigious David Bellamy Gold Conservation Award for



more than a decade.

Owner Conor O'Neill expressed his appreciation for the continued support from visitors. "We're incredibly proud of the recognition we've received over the years, and it's all down to the support of our guests. Their votes, feedback and continued return visits keep us moving

forward," he said.

That spirit of continuous improvement lies at the heart of the park's success. Over the past year, Ballyness has continued to invest in upgrades and enhancements to make every stay memorable. A new extension to the holiday home park has added 26 spacious pitches with countryside views, setting a new benchmark for holiday home standards along the North Coast. The play park—already a favourite with families—was also expanded with new features designed specifically to entertain younger children.

Looking ahead, further development is already underway. Plans are in place to refurbish the on-site shop and games barn ahead of the 2026 season, all part of a wider strategy to continue improving the facilities and experiences that guests value most.

Of course, Ballyness offers more than just award-winning amenities. Perfectly positioned just minutes from

the Giant's Causeway and Old Bushmills Distillery, the park provides an ideal base for exploring the stunning North Antrim coast. Its commitment to conservation remains a key focus, with three thriving wildlife ponds and an eight-acre woodland dog walk, newly planted with 5,000 native trees. Described by the late botanist David Bellamy as "an exciting wildlife wonderland," the natural environment at Ballyness provides a peaceful retreat for guests and a safe haven for wildlife.

With its unique blend of innovation, sustainability, and genuine customer care, Ballyness Caravan Park continues to lead the way—not just in Northern Ireland, but across the UK. From everyone at Ballyness, the message remains the same: Thank you for helping make Ballyness what it is today and Here's to many more years of making memories together.

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Embrace the Autumn Splendour: Tips for Your Next Walk

Autumn is arguably one of the most beautiful seasons for outdoor exploration. Here are some tips to make your autumn walks even more enjoyable:

1. Time it Right: The peak of autumn colour varies each year and by region, but generally, late September to mid-November offers the best chances in many temperate climates.

2. Seek Out Deciduous Woodlands: While urban parks can offer glimpses of colour, dedicated woodlands and forests will provide the most immersive and spectacular autumnal experience. Look for areas with a variety of tree species for a diverse palette.

3. Go on a Sunny Day (with a bit of chill): Bright sunshine will make the colours pop and truly glow. The best days for viewing often follow crisp, cool nights (which help promote anthocyanin production).
4. Look for Water Features: Lakes, rivers, and ponds create stunning reflections of the colourful foliage, doubling the beauty.

5. Dress in Layers: Autumn weather can be unpredictable. Layers will allow you to adjust to changing temperatures throughout your walk. Don't forget waterproofs in case of an unexpected shower.

6. Wear Sturdy, Comfortable Footwear: Trails can be wet, muddy, or covered in fallen leaves, which can be slippery. Good walking shoes or boots are essential.
7. Bring a Camera: You'll want to capture the breathtaking beauty. Experiment with different angles and lighting to get the best shots.

8. Pack a Flask and Snacks: A warm drink (tea, coffee, or hot chocolate) and some autumnal treats (like apples or flapjacks) can enhance your walk, especially on a cooler day.

9. Engage Your Senses: Beyond the visual feast, autumn offers a symphony of other sensations.
10. Listen to the satisfying crunch of leaves underfoot, breathe in the earthy scent of damp soil and decaying leaves, and feel the crisp air on your cheeks.

11. Leave No Trace: Remember to stick to marked paths, take only photographs, and leave the natural environment as you found it for others to enjoy.

12. So, as the days shorten and the air grows crisp, pull on your walking boots and head outdoors. The fleeting, vibrant beauty of autumn's foliage is a spectacle not to be missed, a true celebration of nature's artistry before winter's slumber.
-
- ## Do you see a change in deciduous trees?
- As we enter the autumn season, our deciduous trees begin the annual, much-loved time of changing leaf colour and fall.
- Why and how that happens deepens our understanding of trees, providing insights into how they live and function. The reasons for leaf fall are relatively simple: leaves on deciduous trees are not frost-hardy and would be damaged and die in winter if the trees didn't have a mechanism to allow them to drop; in a sense, they die at a time of the tree's choosing, rather than be killed. Also, if trees didn't shed their leaves in autumn, they would be in greater danger from seasonal storms. And the mechanism for leaf fall is also relatively simple: shorter days trigger hormones that start a process which results in the gradual weakening of a special layer of cells at the base of the leaf, allowing it to drop. But where do the colours come from? The amazing fact is that colour pigments are already there, in the leaves, but we can't see them until autumn, because they are hidden by the green of chlorophyll. As most of us know, chlorophyll is the chemical which enables plants to use the sun's energy to convert carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates...the food that trees need to live and grow...and as the days shorten and trees prepare for dormancy, a bit like hibernation, they no longer need that food. However, nature wastes nothing, and as the trees break down and reabsorb chlorophyll, and try to absorb final sugars, the yellow and orange of carotenoids are revealed (these are the pigments which also give carrots their colour), followed, at least in some trees, by red and even purple, signs of sugars trapped in the leaves. Weather also plays a part. Low temperatures destroy chlorophyll, so frosty nights produce yellow leaves. Conversely, periods of warmer dry weather promote red pigments, although these are also weakened by frosts, so we see fewer red leaves in cold seasons. And the browns? These are the colours of the cell walls when the leaf is completely dried out and ready to fall. The good news, of course, is that deciduous trees have already prepared the buds for next year's leaves before autumn, so the natural cycle goes on, and on, and on... JVA
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SEPTEMBER 2025 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

As summer transitions into autumn, County Down, Northern Ireland, bursts with vibrant events and festivals throughout August and September 2025.

From world-class music to local food celebrations, historical insights, and family fun, there's something to captivate every visitor.

Beyond the major festivals, August offers a range of ongoing activities and family-friendly experiences:

Donaghadee Summer Festival (Ongoing until September 21st, Donaghadee): This bumper summer festival continues into August with a mix of beloved returning events and new additions across various locations in and around Donaghadee.

Sir Samuel Kelly Project (Ongoing until September 30th, Donaghadee): Visit the Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat at Marina Carpark and explore an exhibition detailing its fascinating story.

Dragonfly Festival (Ongoing until September 21st, WWT Castle Espie Wetland Centre, Comber): Make special family memories at WWT's first-ever

Dragonfly Festival, offering a chance to connect with nature.

Discover Groomsport - Walking Tours (Ongoing until September 13th, Groomsport): Join local ambassadors for free walking tours, delving into the amazing history of Groomsport village.

Inspiration and Transformation Exhibition (Until August 31st, North Down Museum, Bangor): Explore an exciting new exhibition showcasing the works of County Down artists, celebrating the region's long history of artistic expression.

Summer Camps and Outdoor Adventures: Throughout August, several multi-activity summer schemes are available, such as the Strangford Lough Activity Centre Summer Scheme (until August 21st, Killinchy) and Kids Summer Adventure Camp (various dates, Rostrevor). For animal lovers, Cranfield Alpacas in Kilkeel offers various alpaca



adventure and field walk experiences, while the Slievenaman Goat Trail and Petting Farm in Newcastle provides a unique countryside adventure with breathtaking Mourne Mountain views.

Summer of Play at Castle Ward (Until August 31st, Downpatrick): Experience a summer of medieval adventure with thrilling challenges, interactive quests, and fantasy fun at Castle Ward.

September: Culinary Delights and Autumnal Entertainment

As the leaves begin to turn, September in County Down brings a focus on food and a continuation of cultural events.

Eats and Beats Festival (September 6th-7th, Newcastle): This highly anticipated festival returns to Newcastle, offering a vibrant celebration of food and music. With

two live music stages showcasing local and international talent, and an array of locally sourced produce, artisanal delights, and live cookery demonstrations, it's a feast Newcastle Restaurant Week (September 1st-7th, Newcastle): Leading up to and coinciding with Eats and Beats, Newcastle Restaurant Week provides an opportunity to sample special dishes made with local seafood, farm-fresh vegetables, and homemade desserts at participating eateries.

Other notable events in September include:

LUX Beginners Jewellery Making Workshop (Various dates in September, Hollywood): Unleash your creativity and learn the art of jewellery making in a fun and relaxing workshop setting.

Paddy Raff - Here's One for Ya! (September

13th, Down Arts Centre, Downpatrick): Catch Northern Irish comedian Paddy Raff on his successful tour, promising more comedy songs and hilarious tales.

Grant Thornton Race Evening (September 5th, Down Royal Racecourse, Lisburn): Enjoy a thrilling day out at the races with family and friends.

Comic Con Northern Ireland (September 6th-7th, Eikon Exhibition Centre, Lisburn): A fantastic event for families and fans of pop culture, with a wide range of activities and attractions.

Garden Workshops (Ongoing until September 14th, Hillsborough Castle & Gardens, Royal Hillsborough): Join expert gardeners for hands-on workshops in the idyllic setting of Hillsborough Castle's gardens.

Scarva Band Concerts (Ongoing until September 28th, Scarva

Bandstand): Enjoy free outdoor band concerts every Sunday afternoon.

Forest-bathing (September 28th, Killeavy Castle Estate): Deepen your connection with nature through a calming and restorative forest-bathing experience.

Downpatrick Racecourse Fixtures (September 19th, Downpatrick): Another opportunity to enjoy the excitement of live horse racing, followed by live music.

County Down in August and September 2025 promises an abundance of experiences, from captivating cultural festivals to outdoor adventures and culinary delights. Be sure to check individual event listings for specific times, ticketing information, and any updates. Plan your visit to this beautiful part of Northern Ireland and immerse yourself in its vibrant autumnal offerings!

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Effortlessly electric: the all-new Nissan LEAF is the EV for everyone

Nissan Motor Co, Ltd. Recently launched the all-new LEAF. The third-generation electric vehicle (EV) benefits from over 15 years of real-world insights gained through global sales of nearly 700,000 units.

Beyond appealing to EV intenders, the all-new LEAF provides a compelling alternative for internal combustion engine (ICE) buyers with its substantially increased maximum range, enhanced charging speed and a technology suite that makes daily driving easier and enriches owners lifestyles.

The all-new LEAF is targeted to arrive at retailers across the United States from autumn, with other regions to follow.

The all-new LEAF embodies Nissan’s Timeless Japanese Futurism design with a distinctive Japanese aesthetic conveyed in a simple yet powerfully modern way.

A fastback-like silhouette and features such as flush front door handles, aerotuned wheels and a flat underbody combine to ensure the all-new LEAF not only looks bold and sleek, but also offers a 0.26 drag coefficient for U.S. and Japan models, and an even more impressive 0.25 for European variants.

The interior is spacious with an almost entirely flat floor courtesy of Nissan’s CMF-EV platform and the wide horizontal instrument panel appears to be floating.

A Nissan-first Dimming Panoramic Roof featuring heat shielding with embedded Polymer Dispersed Liquid Crystal (PDL) technology allows owners to enjoy natural light



and year-round comfort at the touch of a button.

The all-new LEAF delivers a responsive, ultra-smooth drive. The all-new, 3-in-1 EV powertrain with an integrated motor, inverter and reducer is 10% smaller than its predecessor and features Nissan’s unique motor control, which enhances refinement.

The new motor, paired with a new, high-rigidity motor-mount bracket, supports a 75-percent reduction in motor vibration compared to the outgoing model.

For select regions, newly available Intelligent Distance Control Assist helps intuitively maintain a set distance from the vehicle in front

while driving in city traffic and also optimizes regenerative braking.

The all-new LEAF is available with two liquid-cooled lithium-ion battery options, both of which offer thermal conditioning functionality.

Select models are powered by batteries with 52 kWh of usable capacity, supporting an output of 130 kW and 345 Nm of torque. Larger 75 kWh batteries are also available, providing 160 kW and 355 Nm of torque.

An enhanced thermal recovery and management system harvests heat created by the onboard charger (OBC) to warm up the battery, increasing its regeneration potential in

cold weather.

Additionally, on applicable grades a new intelligent navigation-linked thermal conditioning function optimizes battery cooling based on the selected drive route.

When connected to a fast charger, owners can replenish 10-80% of their charge in as little as 35 minutes.

The all-new, third generation Nissan LEAF will be assembled at the Tochigi Plant in Japan, as well as at Nissan’s state-of-the-art production facility in Sunderland, northeast England.

Further details including pricing will be provided closer to the start of sales in each respective market.

The Rise of the Electric SUV

The trend towards electric SUVs continues unabated, and this autumn will introduce several significant new players to the segment.

BMW iX3 (Neue Klasse): BMW’s next-generation iX3 is one of the most anticipated EVs of the year. Based on the brand’s “Neue Klasse” design language, it promises enhanced battery technology, cutting-edge infotainment, and a fresh aesthetic. This new iX3 aims to build on the success of the current model, providing an exciting electric option for those who favor the popular X3 SUV.

Range Rover EV: For those seeking luxury and zero-emission driving, the fully electric Range Rover is finally set to arrive. This model is expected to maintain the brand’s reputation for opulence and refinement, while offering a powerful and smooth electric powertrain. It will be a direct competitor to high-end EVs like the Tesla Model X and the Mercedes-Benz EQS SUV.

Kia EV5: Following the success of the EV6 and EV9, Kia is expanding its electric lineup with the EV5. This mid-sized SUV is expected to be a

practical and stylish family car, competing with models like the Tesla Model Y and Skoda Enyaq. With a focus on sustainable materials and advanced technology, the EV5 is set to be a strong contender in the competitive family SUV market.

Hyundai Ioniq 9: Hyundai is expanding its Ioniq family with the Ioniq 9, a large seven-seat SUV. This futuristic model is expected to offer a generous range and all the advanced features that have made the Ioniq lineup so popular.

The push for more accessible electric cars is gaining momentum, and several new models are poised to make EV ownership more attainable.

Skoda Epiq: Skoda’s new small electric SUV, the Epiq, is designed to be a budget-friendly option for urban drivers. Sharing parts with the upcoming Volkswagen ID.2 and Cupra Raval, it promises over 248 miles of range and a price tag that will appeal to a wide range of buyers. The Epiq’s distinct styling and practical



interior are set to make it a standout in the affordable EV market.

Fiat Grande Panda: Reviving the iconic Panda nameplate, the new Fiat Grande Panda is a versatile and efficient city car. It will be available in both hybrid and electric versions, catering to a diverse set of needs. With its retro charm and accessible price point, the Grande Panda is an excellent choice for eco-conscious city dwellers.

Renault Twingo: The Twingo is making a comeback as an affordable electric city car. Targeting a price point under £20,000, it aims to fill a crucial

gap in the market for budget-friendly EVs. With its compact size and cheerful design, it’s set to be a popular option for those seeking a fun and efficient car for daily urban use.

This autumn’s new car lineup in the UK showcases a clear direction for the industry: a rapid shift towards electrification across all segments, from family-friendly SUVs to high-performance supercars. With a diverse range of models set to arrive, there’s something for every type of driver looking to get behind the wheel of a brand-new car.

Essential Car Maintenance for Autumn

As the vibrant greens of summer give way to the golden hues of autumn, the change in seasons brings with it unique challenges for your vehicle.

Cooler temperatures, increased rainfall, and falling leaves can all impact your car’s performance and safety. Taking a proactive approach to car maintenance now can save you headaches and costly repairs down the line. Here’s a rundown of essential checks to ensure

your car is autumn-ready. Check Your Tyres: Grip and Pressure Are Key Your tyres are your car’s only point of contact with the road, and their condition is paramount for autumn driving. • Tread Depth: Aim for at least 3mm of tread depth

for optimal grip in wet conditions. If your tyres are nearing the legal limit (typically 1.6mm in the UK), consider replacing them before the wet weather sets in.

• Tyre Pressure: As temperatures drop, so does tyre pressure. Check your tyre pressures regularly (at least once a month) when the tyres are cold, and inflate them to the manufacturer’s recommended levels. Correct pressure improves handling, fuel efficiency, and tyre longevity.

• Punctures and Sidewall Damage: Inspect your tyres for any bulges, cracks, or embedded objects that could lead to a sudden deflation. Inspect Your Wipers and Washer Fluid: Clear Vision is Non-Negotiable Autumn often brings more

rain and even early morning mist.

• Wiper Blades: Worn or cracked wiper blades won’t clear your windshield effectively, leading to reduced visibility. Replace them if they leave streaks or chatter across the glass.

• Washer Fluid: Top up your washer fluid reservoir with a good quality screen wash that includes an antifreeze agent. This prevents the fluid from freezing in colder temperatures and helps to clear grime and salt from the road.

Test Your Lights: Be Seen and See Clearly Daylight hours shorten significantly in autumn, making properly functioning lights crucial.

• All Lights: Check all exterior lights – headlights

(high and low beam), tail lights, brake lights, indicators, and fog lights – to ensure they are working correctly. Replace any blown bulbs promptly.

• Headlight Clarity: Over time, headlight lenses can become cloudy. Consider a headlight restoration kit if yours are looking dull, as this can significantly improve light output.

Examine Your Brakes: Stopping Power Matters Wet and leafy roads can significantly increase stopping distances.

Brake Pads and Discs: Listen for any squealing or grinding noises when you brake, and pay attention to any changes in pedal feel (e.g., spongy or vibrating). If you have any concerns, have your brakes inspected by a qualified mechanic.

They will check the thickness of your brake pads and the condition of your discs.

Check Your Battery: Don’t Get Caught Out by the Cold

Cold weather puts extra strain on your car’s battery.

• Battery Age: If your battery is over three years old, it’s worth having it tested.

• Terminals: Look for any signs of corrosion on the battery terminals, and ensure they are clean and securely fastened.

Top Up Your Coolant/ Antifreeze: Protect Against Freezing

Your coolant system not only keeps your engine from overheating but also prevents the water in the system from freezing in cold temperatures.



• Level and Strength: Check your coolant reservoir and ensure the level is between the min and max marks. If you’re unsure about the strength of your antifreeze, a mechanic can test it for you.

Clear Out Debris: Protect Against Clogs and Corrosion

Falling leaves and other organic matter can accumulate in various parts of your car.

• Wiper Scuttle/Drain Channels: Clear leaves from the area around your windscreen wipers and the drain channels beneath your bonnet. Blockages here can lead to water ingress into the cabin or affect electrical components.

• Radiator Grille: Remove any leaves or debris from your car’s front grille, as these can restrict airflow to the radiator and lead to overheating.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR OUTSIDE DRAIN IS BLOCKED

If your outside drain is blocked, we'll take you through your options on how to clear it yourself, including tools and expert techniques.

You're here because you've probably noticed a stench, damage to electrical fittings, or there's a lot of water sitting on the ground outside your home.

The following are often causes of a blocked drain. Leaves (covering the grid or inside the drain); Food waste, fat or oil from the kitchen sink; Soil or sand

due to a collapsed drain; Objects lodged in the pipes; Tree root damage or Toilet roll build-up.

Before deciding what to do - whether to repair yourself or hire a professional - you'll need to assess the damage. Take a look at the drain and see what you're dealing with. It might be that the blockage is

caused by leaf litter on the grid, in which case you can just clear it by hand. In most blocked drain cases though, you'll need to lift the cover and take a look inside.

To lift a cover you might need a screwdriver or a piece of rope. Once you have access to the pipe below, you're looking to see if the blockage is visible or out of sight, this will give you an idea of the work and tools needed to clear it.

If, after assessing the cause of the blockage, you're confident that you can clear it yourself, then you can source the tools needed for the job. Different

clogs require different solutions to clear them. If the blockage isn't too serious - using a solution is an obvious first step. If that doesn't work you'll need: Rubber gloves with long sleeves; Goggles and a face mask; Drain rods; Bucket and bin bags and a Pressure hose.

Armed with the tools and equipment above, including the all-important safety gear, you can take action yourself if your outside drain keeps blocking.

Bear in mind that clearing an outside drain without the help of a professional is only possible if it's not too clogged or too complex



a job.

Remove any blockages - This is all about doing the obvious and simple stuff first, as that might be all it takes to clear a blocked drain outside your house.

Put on your long-sleeve gloves, goggles and face mask, remove any debris you can easily reach, such as leaves, soap scum or food waste, and place

it in your bucket or bin bag.

Clear the blockage with your rods - If clearing the drain by hand doesn't work, then it's time for the rods.

Start with one and carefully insert down the drain and into the pipe below.

If you feel resistance, twist the rod into the blockage with sufficient pressure until you break

through. Can't feel it? Connect more rods until you find the blockage.

Clean up the debris - You don't want to do all that dirty work only to have to do it all over again in a few days, so clear up any material you removed and use the opportunity to clear away anything nearby that might cause another blockage.

Again, pop it in your bucket or bin bag.

It's important to take care when using rods or any kind of invasive equipment down your outside drain and pipes, as any damage caused could result in a hefty repair bill and a lot of upheaval to access the area.

To avoid this, or if your drain won't unblock, it's always advisable to call in a professional to take care of the job and it might not cost as much as you think.

On average you'll pay £60 for a call out, with drain rodding costing £80, jetting £175 and a drain CCTV survey for really difficult jobs costing on average £250. They will have the equipment,

know-how and insurance to unblock your outside drain efficiently and safely. Plus, you don't get dirty!

For more information see <https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/expert-advice/outside-drain-blocked-problem-solve/>

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How to find a good tradesperson!

The majority of tradespeople are hard-working, reliable and will do a good job, but we've all heard of the cowboy horror stories.

Let's help you to avoid the bad eggs with this guide that looks at how to find a good tradesperson in your area. Request quotes from at least 3 tradespeople

With all home improvement projects, we always recommend obtaining at least three quotes from different tradespeople in your area. You'll want to shop around to make sure you're paying a fair price for the work.

Make sure they have the relevant qualifications

To get the best results, it's important to hire tradespeople who are dedicated to their trade. Look for a tradesperson with relevant qualifications and accreditations, and check if they're part of national trade schemes.

Choose tradespeople with local experience

Hiring a tradesperson with a lot of local experience can be really valuable. They'll have a working knowledge of local planning permission, have access to a local network of suppliers and labour, and will be close at hand should you need them during the course of your project.

Ask for customer references (and contact them)

We do this to make sure a tradesperson's reviews on our website are real, but there's certainly no harm in you following up on customer references.

When you've found a tradesperson (or tradespeople) you think could be right for the



job, ask them to provide you with references from previous customers about the quality of the tradesperson's work, what it was like to work with them, and would they hire them again.

Ask these 10 questions... Before you hire a tradesperson, it's a good idea to meet with them in person to discuss the work you need them to do. That way, you can find out more about their experience and approach to their trade.

If you want to know how to find a tradesperson you can trust, ask potential candidates these questions:

1. How long have you been working in the business?
2. What qualifications

and/or accreditations do you have?

3. Have you done many projects like this before?

4. Can you show me examples of previous projects that you've worked on?

5. Do you have appropriate insurance, and can you provide valid certificates?

6. Could you provide me with references from previous customers for me to contact?

7. Do you offer a customer satisfaction guarantee?

8. How long will it take you to complete the work? And when can you start?

9. How much will it cost, and what are the payment terms?

10. What steps do you take to keep your work on

schedule and within budget?

The average cost of a tradesperson will depend on the trade, the nature of the work, and where they are located (labour costs in London tend to be higher than in the North).

To help you plan a budget, here are some average rates you can expect to pay:

- Plumber costs – £40 - £60 Per hour or around £350 per day
- Carpenter prices– £30 - £45 per hour
- Builder rates – £50 per hour or £400 per day
- Electrician rates – £50 per hour or £400 per day
- Painter and decorator prices– £250- £400 per day

For more info see <https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/hiring-guides/find-good-tradesperson/>

Autumn Tasks in the Home

Autumn cleaning is about creating a cosy, functional, and organised space for the winter months. Focus on tasks that ready your home for the cold.

- Windows and Doors:

Inspect every window and exterior door in your home for signs of drafts or gaps. A simple way to do this is by running your hand along the frame to feel for cold air or holding a lit candle near the edges to see if the flame flickers. If you notice leaks, apply fresh weather stripping, install a draft excluder, or use caulk to seal gaps. This not only prevents heat from escaping but also keeps cold air out, improving comfort and reducing your heating bills. Before winter sets in, give your windows a thorough clean inside and out—clear glass lets in more natural light during short winter days, which can brighten your home and help slightly with warmth.

- Heating System:

Before temperatures drop, arrange for a professional to service your furnace, boiler, or heat pump. A routine inspection ensures your heating system runs efficiently, reducing the risk of breakdowns during the coldest months. Replace or clean furnace filters to maintain good airflow and air quality. If you have radiators, bleed them by opening the valve slightly



until water starts to appear—this removes trapped air, allowing them to heat evenly. For programmable thermostats, check the settings so your heating schedule matches your winter lifestyle.

- Fireplace and Chimney:

For wood-burning fireplaces, have the chimney swept by a certified professional to remove soot and creosote, which can cause dangerous chimney fires. This is also a good time to check for any cracks or damage in the chimney structure. Stockpile dry, seasoned firewood in a covered location, or, if you

have a gas or electric fireplace, test it to ensure it's working properly before the first cold snap.

- Gutters and Downspouts:

Clear leaves, twigs, and debris from your gutters and downspouts before heavy autumn rains arrive. Blocked gutters can cause water to overflow, potentially damaging your roof, walls, and foundation. Check that downspouts direct water at least three feet away from your home's base to prevent pooling and erosion. Installing gutter guards can help reduce future cleaning needs.

- Outdoor Furniture

and Garden:

Give your outdoor furniture a good clean to remove dirt, mold, or pollen buildup, then cover it with weather-resistant covers to protect it through the winter. Store cushions and fabrics indoors to prevent dampness and mildew.

Mow your lawn one last time before growth stops, trim back perennials, and plant spring bulbs like tulips and daffodils before the ground freezes. Drain garden hoses completely, coil them, and store them away. Shut off and drain any outdoor taps to avoid frozen pipes, which can cause costly bursts.

How To Transform Your kitchen Without Breaking The Bank

Kitchen renovations don't have to break the bank; even small changes can make a huge difference.

Add New Appliances

Appliances can double as both functional pieces of tech and decorative accessories. There is a wealth of choice when it comes to kitchen appliances and there is something for you no matter what your budget is. An orange fridge might be too bold and too expensive for most, but why not mix it up with a cherry red kettle or a cobalt blue toaster.

Mix Up Your Lighting

You would be surprised what

a difference that changing you lighting can do to a space. Once again the sheer abundance of options online and in store allows every style and budget to be catered for.

You can easily transform the mood of your kitchen simply by adding or changing your light source, drawing attention to certain areas and avoiding others.

By simply avoiding the sterile bright lighting that is often used, you can create a moody, subdued

style in your kitchen that will change the mood of everyone that enters. Small changes here and there such as these can make a huge difference to the look and feel of your kitchen.

Upgrade Your Fixtures

Get rid of those age-beaten handles and replace them with new, metallic fixtures to immediately upgrade your kitchen. Rust and damaged items such as handles can make your kitchen look far older than it should and changing these can be

a cheap way of giving your kitchen that lift it so badly needs.

Rusty taps are yet another easy fix that can do wonders for your kitchen. It is far too easy to put this off but if replaced it can breathe new life into that kitchen and give it the fresh look it deserves.

Storage

All too often you can't even appreciate the kitchen that you do have because every inch of the surface is cluttered. This can be easily remedied with the proper use of

storage. Once you are able to clear the space it will begin to feel larger, brighter and more modern. Storage solutions can be found very easily through racks, baskets, hooks and magnets – they do not have to break the bank.

Replace Your Counter-Top

If your budget permits, this can work wonders for transforming your kitchen and it is not always as expensive as you might think. Laminate kitchen counter tops range

in prices and could be that new addition that sparks life back into your kitchen. You might even be surprised by the options available, so why not have a look!

Easy Fix For Cabinets

One of the most common mistakes in kitchen design is using the wrong colour of paint from the beginning. Picking too dark a tone will make the space feel small and absorb the natural light which will seriously affect the mood of the room.

However, this is an easy fix. With a simple fresh coat of paint your kitchen can be transformed. Choosing a light, neutral tone such as white will make the room feel larger, brighter and more modern by

reflecting the natural light.

Interior designers often suggest that removing cabinet doors to create open-plan shelving can really open a kitchen up and emphasise all the space you have.



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