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Daffodils in bloom in the grounds of The Bowes Museum, April 2025  
© The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

## STEP INTO SPRING AT THE BOWES MUSEUM

Saturday, 12 – Sunday 27 April 2025

The Bowes Museum welcomes the arrival of spring with a varied programme of free activities, included in admission, between Saturday, 12 April – Sunday, 27 April 2025 for all ages to enjoy. With nature, sustainability and innovation at the heart of this year's programme, the museum celebrates 200 years of its inspiring co-founder Joséphine Bowes.

### Daily activities:

**Museum Makes**, a self-led creative activity in the vibrant Create Space offers visitors an opportunity to explore their creativity, play with a variety of materials and immerse themselves in making at their own pace.

The insightful 11am **Spotlight Tours** continue daily, giving an informative introduction to an exhibition, collection item or the building for up to 30 minutes.

The majestic 252-year-old **Silver Swan** will perform twice daily at 11:45am and 2pm throughout the half term. Experience the magic and learn about its history in a brief talk by one of the museum's knowledgeable staff.

Families can pick up an interactive ***Deadly Beauty from the Medicine Box*** Trail Booklet at Reception and embark on a journey through the galleries to learn about blood-curdling botanicals and tragic tales of the past.

**Sensory Packs** designed for visitors with SEND (special educational needs and disability) have been introduced to coincide with Autism Awareness Month in April, a new permanent resource to ensure everyone can fully enjoy their museum experience. Sensory Packs can be collected in the entrance hall on the day.

### **22 acres of parkland:**

Head outside to see the art installation ***Kinetic Arboretum*** by Martin Smith behind the museum, blooming flowers, and be immersed in birdsong. Burn off some energy at the play area or collect an **Explorer Bag** from Reception that includes a guide and magnifying glasses to help identify the birds, plants and insects that live in the grounds.

On a sunny day, relax and enjoy the breathtaking views of Teesdale while savouring delicious food and refreshing beverages from **Café Bowes** in the new outdoor seating area, catering for families, couples and those walking in the grounds with their canine companions.

### **Activities for families with younger children:**

Play, and discover natural wonders and wonderful wildlife in **Nature Spotters**, an immersive activity for children aged under 10. Gather in an outdoor-inspired campsite in the Conversation Gallery, or in the grounds if it's a sunny day, from 1pm - 2pm on Tuesday 15 and 22 April and Friday 18 and 25 April.

Join **Bug Club**, a new drop-in activity held in the Create Space 1pm - 3pm on Thursday, 17 and 24 April. Investigate the impact of insects on museum objects and uncover what happens to different materials when bugs take over.

**Stay and Play** continues weekly on Thursdays from 10am until 4pm. This is the perfect way for the museum's younger audiences to soak up the atmosphere as they get creative in these self-led, free-play sessions in the Conversation Gallery.

### **Activities for families with older children and adults:**

Let spring and The Bowes Museum's collection inspire your curiosity and creativity in **Artist Maker Workshops** every Saturday, and Wednesdays during the half term between 1pm – 3pm. The museum's team of artists are on hand to help you to create and experiment with different materials to make something unique.

Create a pollinator friendly wildflower bomb to take home in **Seed Bomb Workshops** held on Monday, 14 and 21 April at 2:30. Discover the vital role wildflowers play in supporting pollinators and boosting local biodiversity and learn how you can contribute with your creation.

The Curator Series continues 17 April at 2:30pm with Co-Production Curator, Eleanor Thirlway's talk **Portraits by Female Artists**. Eleanor will discuss the work of women artists from the museum's collection and their significance in art history, on both the art world and cultural landscape of their time.

Gain rare access to the vault that houses objects from the museum's fashion and textile collection in a 30-minute **Tour of the Fashion & Textile Vault** on Thursday, 24 April at 11:30. Curator of Fashion and Textiles, Rachel Whitworth will highlight some interesting pieces and will explain about the conservation techniques used to preserve these treasures.

Celebrate Joséphine Bowes' 200<sup>th</sup> birthday on Saturday, 26 April and join Honorary Archivist, Dr. Judith Phillips at 2:30pm for a talk about **Joséphine's Family and Friends**. Learn how Joséphine's circle influenced her as an artist, collector, and patron of the arts, as Judith unveils her remarkable story.

For more information about talks and tours, and to book your space, visit the [website](#).

#### **Exhibitions not to be seen elsewhere:**

*[From Joséphine Bowes: Trendsetters and Trailblazers](#)* celebrates Joséphine as a visionary collector and presents a contemporary continuation of the collection, suggesting where her considerable knowledge of artistic trends might have taken The Bowes Museum next. The highly acclaimed exhibition features an eclectic mix of paintings, sculptures, photography, furniture, textiles and ceramics from world-renowned artists including Pablo Picasso, Sir Grayson Perry CBE, Gillian Wearing CBE, RA and contemporaries including Joy Labinjo, Lucy Waters, and a special commission piece by Phoebe Cummings.

*[Joséphine: A Woman of Taste and Fashion](#)* showcases the variety and breadth of Joséphine and John Bowes' acquisitions of textiles, and highlights Joséphine's interest in contemporary fashion. This special display in the Fashion & Textile gallery presents historical textiles including embroideries, lace, and items purchased for the museum at the Exposition Universelle of 1867, rare surviving items from Joséphine's wardrobe, and historic and contemporary examples of French fashion, including pieces by iconic twentieth-century designers including Elsa Schiaparelli, Jacques Fath and Yves Saint Laurent.

The Bowes Museum, Café Bowes and the shop is open daily 10am – 5pm. Enjoy a fun-filled day out and quality time with friends and family at The Bowes Museum this Spring half term. Don't forget, under 18s and full-time students always go free.

–ENDS–

#### **Note to editors and picture desks:**

Download high-resolution images of what visitors can expect to see when visiting this [Springtime Holiday at The Bowes Museum](#). Please credit: ©The Bowes Museum, Claire Collinson Photography

#### **About The Bowes Museum**

The Bowes Museum is a charity managing a Grade 1 listed accredited Museum and Grade 2 listed parkland in Barnard Castle. Founded by Joséphine & John Bowes 150+ years ago, this purpose-built Museum brings together an extraordinary, Designated collection of European fine and decorative art as a cultural resource for the people of Northern England, where today we celebrate artists, designers and makers.

The Bowes Museum receives funding from Durham County Council and, as a National Portfolio Organisation, receives support from Arts Council England. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. [artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

The Bowes Museum is a member of the Discover Durham partnership of attractions, whose commitment is to promote Durham as an exciting and vibrant group travel destination and to provide the travel trade with a professional and knowledgeable service. [discoverdurham.co.uk](https://discoverdurham.co.uk)

Admission to The Bowes Museum is £17.70 for local members (residents of County Durham and Darlington), £20.00 for members (residents elsewhere), £19.50 for a day ticket, £21.45 for a day ticket including gift aid. Under 18s, full time students and carers are free.

As a registered charity (number 1079639) The Bowes Museum needs to generate more than half of its income each year to care for the historic collection, buildings and parkland. Your donations are vital to that work. Visit [thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support](https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support) for more information.



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