

Media release

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## May your Half-Term be Bursting with Creative Activities

Saturday 24 May – Sunday 1 June



Artist Makers Session © The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle. Photography by Claire Collinson.

This May school holidays there's something for all the family at The Bowes Museum. Engage with both art and nature through creative events for all ages, running from Saturday 24 May to Sunday 1 June 2025. From designing fantasy fashion and creating outdoor-inspired collages to exploring the process behind contemporary art, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

### Daily Activities:

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

Experience the magic of our majestic 252-year-old **Silver Swan**. Join us daily at 11:45am and 2:00pm for a brief talk by one of our knowledgeable staff, followed by a captivating performance of this historic and world-famous automaton.

Pick up your free copies of the **LGBTQIA+ Object Trail** and **Beauty from the Medicine Box Trail** booklets at Reception. These self-guided tours offer new perspectives on the collection, developed in collaboration with community voices to enrich your museum journey.

Unleash your creativity in **Museum Makes**, a self-led activity in our vibrant Create Space. Use a variety of materials to make your own masterpiece, the space is perfect for visitors of all ages.

To ensure an inclusive experience for everyone, **sensory packs** are available in the entrance hall. Designed especially for visitors with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities), these packs are a permanent resource to help make visits as engaging and comfortable as possible.

### Exclusive May Events:

Discover more about an artist featured in *From Joséphine: Trendsetters and Trailblazers* at [Exhibiting Artist Talks: Charlotte Hodes](#) on 24 May 2:30pm - 3:30pm. Known for her ceramic works that blur the boundaries between fine and decorative arts, Hodes will share how historical collections and archives shape her creative process.

Let your imagination run wild in [Artist Makers: Fantasy Fashion](#), a fashion collage workshop. On 24 May 2025 between 1pm – 3pm use mannequin templates to your design dream outfits by layering and shaping vibrant coloured papers.

Highlight the importance of caring for our outdoor spaces and wildlife in [Artist Makers: Natural Creations](#). On 28 May 1pm – 3pm create a collage inspired from shapes and textures in the parkland using natural materials.

Come to [Bug Club](#) on 29 May 1:00-3:00, where we investigate the effects of insects on collection items. We will look at a variety of different materials in the museum and find out what happens when bugs take over!

On 27 and 30 May 1:00-2:00 the Conversation gallery will be transformed to outdoor-inspired campsite for [Nature Spotters](#). Discover the fascinating world of wildlife in the parkland, delve into the natural wonders that influenced some of the museum's treasures and play games inspired by the great outdoors.

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

Along with 22 gallery spaces, home silver, glass, furniture, musical instruments, paintings there are **two celebratory exhibitions to see.**

[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 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.

#### **Café Bowes and Shop:**

Soak up the stunning views of Teesdale from the outdoor seating area, great for a sunny day. Or unwind in our cosy indoor café, a welcoming space whatever the weather. Both offer a delicious selection of food and refreshing beverages, with options to suit all tastes and dietary needs.

Treat yourself and loved ones to a gift from the shop. The range includes books, greetings cards and postcards, stationery, homeware, jewellery, children's gifts and much more.

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 May half term.

Don't forget, under 18s and full-time students always go free.

-ENDS-

**Note to editors:**

A photograph of an Artist Makers session can be found [here](#).

For film and photography requests and more information, please contact our Marketing & Communications Coordinators:

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**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](http://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](http://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/](http://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support/) for more information.



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