**NAPA**

A Reminiscence & Activity Resource



# THE NORTH EAST REMEMBERED

Produced by The National Activity Providers Association (NAPA)
With grateful thanks to the support of The Hadrian Trust

NAPA
National Activity Providers Association

## About This Resource

### A Note to Readers

The North East Remembered has been developed as a dementia-friendly reminiscence and activity resource to support meaningful conversations, social connection and person-centred activity with older people in care homes, hospitals, community settings and people's own homes. Every effort has been made to ensure the information within this publication is accurate, balanced and respectful.

The content has been informed by extensive research into the history, heritage, geography, traditions, industries and communities of North East England, together with recognised good practice in activity provision, older people and dementia care.

However, the history of any region is rich, diverse and continually evolving. We acknowledge that, despite careful research and consultation, there may be occasional historical, cultural or factual inaccuracies, omissions or differences in local interpretation. The North East is a region of great diversity, and traditions, dialects, customs and memories often vary not only between counties but between neighbouring towns, villages and even individual families.

This resource has never been intended to be a definitive history of the North East. Instead, it is offered as a celebration of the region and, above all, of the people who have lived, worked and built their lives here. We hope readers will receive it in that same spirit.

Throughout the publication we have sought to use language that is inclusive, respectful and person-centred. We recognise that every person's experiences are unique. Not everyone worked in the industries traditionally associated with the North East, and not every family shared the same traditions, customs or opportunities. We have consciously tried to celebrate the diversity of experiences across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Teesside, while recognising that no single publication could ever reflect every individual story.

If, despite these intentions, any wording, example or illustration unintentionally makes assumptions, reinforces stereotypes or fails to reflect someone's lived experience, we sincerely apologise. No offence or exclusion is intended. We remain committed to recognising the dignity, individuality and value of every person.

The activities within this resource are intended to support conversation rather than test memory. There are no right or wrong answers. People living with dementia may remember different things at different times, while others may simply enjoy listening, observing or being alongside others. Every form of participation is equally meaningful.

The resource has been designed to be flexible. Activity providers, healthcare staff, volunteers, carers and family members are encouraged to adapt activities to reflect each person's interests, communication style, culture, beliefs and abilities.



St Marys Lighthouse in Whitley Bay, UK

The most meaningful reminiscence is always the reminiscence that belongs to the individual. Although this publication celebrates North East England, we also hope it will be of value to people who were born in the region and have since moved elsewhere, those whose families have North East roots, and anyone with an interest in the history, culture and communities of this remarkable part of the country. Memories of home often remain important wherever life may lead us.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the thousands of people whose lives have shaped the North East across generations. Their stories, resilience, kindness and community spirit are the true inspiration behind this resource.

We hope The North East Remembered encourages conversations, creates moments of connection, celebrates identity and reminds every person who uses it that their story matters.

**"The history of the North East belongs to everyone. Every memory shared helps to keep that history alive."**

# Foreword

**Hilary Woodhead**
Chief Executive Officer
National Activity Providers Association (NAPA)



## It is a privilege to introduce *The North East Remembered.*

At NAPA, we believe that meaningful activity fundamental to living well. Every person has a unique life story, shaped by their experiences, relationships, interests and the places they call home. When we take time to understand those stories, we create opportunities for connection, purpose and belonging.

This wonderful resource captures the spirit of the North East through its people, places, traditions and communities. It is an invitation to listen, to share stories, to laugh together and to celebrate the lives of older people whose experiences have helped shape this remarkable region.

For people living with dementia, familiar memories can provide comfort, confidence and opportunities to connect with others. A conversation about a favourite beach (mine is Whitley Bay!), the smell of a stottie fresh from the bakery, memories of market day, a brass band playing in the park or supporting a local football team can spark moments of recognition and joy. These moments matter. They remind us that identity, experiences and relationships remain central to who people are.

What makes this resource particularly valuable is its person-centred approach. It does not ask people to remember facts or test their memory. Instead, it encourages curiosity, conversation and genuine human connection. It recognises that there are many ways to participate, through talking, listening, singing, smiling, drawing, sharing photographs or simply enjoying the company of others.

I know this resource will become a valuable companion for activity providers, care colleagues, volunteers, families and healthcare teams working across care homes, hospitals and community settings. It provides practical ideas while celebrating the heritage, culture and identity of the North East in a way that is warm, inclusive and respectful.

I would like to congratulate everyone involved in developing this publication and thank The Hadrian Trust for its generous support in making it possible. Investment in meaningful activity is an investment in people's wellbeing, dignity and quality of life, and resources such as this help ensure that older people remain at the heart of everything we do. I hope The North East Remembered inspires conversations, strengthens relationships and reminds us all of the extraordinary value of every life story.

On behalf of everyone at NAPA, thank you for using this resource and for your continued commitment to enriching the lives of older people.
With best wishes,

***Hilary Woodhead***
***Chief Executive Officer***
***National Activity Providers Association***

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Activity Providers and Older People who contributed their time, experience, and feedback to help create this resource. Their input has been essential in shaping material that is practical, relevant, and meaningful for everyday use.

Feedback from local residents has helped ensure the resource reflects real experiences, preferences, and needs, making it more useful for the wider community.

We are especially grateful for the openness and support shown throughout the process, which has helped us improve and refine the content.

**Special thanks to:**

- Jack Armstrong - Cullercoats
- Jeff Maguire - Whitley Bay
- Gillian Maguire - Whitley Bay

# Guidance

## Supporting Meaningful Reminiscence

Reminiscence is most successful when it focuses on the person rather than the activity.

Instead of asking, "Do you remember this?", consider saying:

- "This reminds me of the seaside. What was your favourite beach?"
- "Many people remember going dancing. Did you ever enjoy dancing?"
- "This photograph makes me think about family celebrations. What celebrations were important to you?"

These open invitations invite people to join the conversation without feeling pressured to remember specific details.

### Tips

- Provide plenty of time for responses.
- Listen with genuine interest.
- Accept memories without correcting small inaccuracies.
- Encourage conversation between people taking part.
- Use objects, photographs, music and familiar smells whenever possible.
- Celebrate every contribution.
- Offer reassurance if someone becomes emotional.
- Be prepared to gently change the subject if memories become distressing.
- Remember that choosing simply to listen is also meaningful participation.


Durham Cathedral

**Ideas to Enhance Sessions**

Consider providing:

- Fresh flowers
- Coal or mining memorabilia
- Old bus tickets
- Newspaper headlines from years gone by
- Local football scarves
- Baking aromas
- Fresh bread
- Lavender
- Traditional sweets
- Family photographs (with permission)

These sensory prompts often encourage conversation naturally.

**The aim is not to test memory. The aim is to support wellbeing, identity, confidence, belonging and connection. Sometimes the greatest success is simply seeing someone smile, laugh or enjoy being part of the group.**

# Chapter One

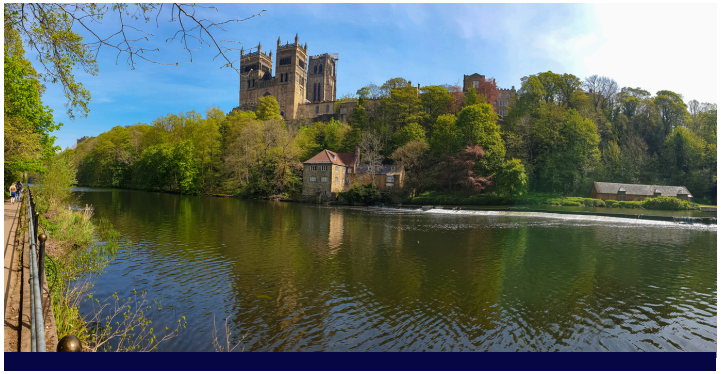
## Our North East

**A Land of Pride, People and Community**

***"You can take the person out of the North East, but you can never take the North East out of the person."***

The North East of England is a place of proud communities, remarkable landscapes and a rich history stretching back thousands of years. From the wild hills of Northumberland to the bustling streets of Newcastle, from the beaches of Sunderland and Hartlepool to the market towns of County Durham and the industries of Teesside, generations of people have helped shape this unique corner of Britain.

Many people remember the North East as a place where neighbours knew one another, children played safely in the streets and communities came together in good times and difficult ones. Whether people grew up in a mining village, a fishing community, a busy city or a rural farming area, there was often a strong sense of belonging.



Durham Cathedral and River Wear in Spring in Durham, England

Families often lived close to one another, with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins just a few streets away. It was common for neighbours to look out for one another. If someone was unwell, meals might appear on the doorstep. If children were playing outside, every adult kept an eye on them. Friendships lasted for decades, and many people worked alongside neighbours, friends and family members.

The rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees have always been at the heart of life in the region. They provided work, transport and opportunities for trade with the rest of the world. Around them grew industries that became famous across the globe, including shipbuilding, engineering, mining and steelmaking.

Yet the North East is much more than its industries. It is also a place of castles, ancient Roman history, beautiful countryside, fishing harbours, music, humour and resilience. Generations have gathered for church fêtes, miners' galas, village carnivals, agricultural shows, football matches, brass band concerts and family picnics by the sea.

Although life has changed enormously over the years, many of the values associated with the North East remain the same: kindness, hard work, humour, generosity and looking after one another.

***No two people will remember the North East in exactly the same way. Each person's memories are unique and deserve to be heard.***

## Let's Talk Together

**There are no right or wrong answers. Invite people to share as much or as little as they wish.**

- **Where did you grow up?**
- **What did your street look like?**
- **Did everyone know one another?**
- **What games did children play outside?**
- **Did your family have a favourite day out?**
- **Were there local shops you visited every week?**
- **What sounds do you remember from your neighbourhood?**
- **Can you remember any special family traditions?**
- **What made your community feel special?**
- **Is there somewhere in the North East that still holds happy memories for you?**

**Allow conversations to develop naturally. One memory often leads to another.**

## Did You Know?

- **Parts of Hadrian's Wall have stood for almost 2,000 years.**
- **The Angel of the North has become one of Britain's best-known landmarks.**
- **First passenger railway to use steam locomotives was in the North East.**
- **The region built hundreds of ships that sailed all over the world.**
- **Northumberland has more castles than any other county in England.**
- **Durham Cathedral has welcomed visitors for almost a thousand years.**
- **Many famous inventors, engineers, artists, musicians and sporting heroes began their lives in the North East.**

# Chapter One

## A Memory Box Activity

Place a selection of familiar objects on a table and invite people to choose one.

**Ideas include:**

- A flat cap
- A miner's lamp (or photograph)
- A bus ticket
- A ration book (replica)
- An enamel mug
- A baking tin
- A football programme
- A postcard from a North East seaside town
- A brass band photograph
- A local newspaper

**Ask open questions such as:**

"What does this remind you of?"
"Who might have used something like this?"
"What memories does it bring back?"

Remember that there is no need to identify an object correctly. The stories it inspires are often far more important than the object itself.

## Activity Idea

Invite everyone to imagine they are welcoming someone who has never visited the North East before.

**Ask:**
"If you could show them just one place, where would you take them?"

People might choose a favourite beach, a market square, a football ground, a village, a park, a church, a castle or simply the street where they grew up.

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which wall was built by the Romans across northern England?
2. Name one of the three main rivers of the North East.
3. Which bird is often seen along the Northumberland coast with its colourful beak?
4. What is the name of the famous statue overlooking Gateshead?
5. Which city is famous for its magnificent cathedral and castle?
6. Which traditional North East food is often eaten with ham or pork?
7. Which county has more castles than any other in England?
8. Can you name a North East seaside town?
9. Which local football teams are well known across the country?
10. What do you think makes the North East a special place?

**Encourage conversation rather than competition.**
**People may enjoy answering together.**

## Quiz Answers

1. Hadrian's Wall
2. The Tyne, Wear or Tees
3. Puffin
4. The Angel of the North
5. Durham
6. Pease pudding
7. Northumberland
8. Examples include Whitley Bay, Tynemouth, Seaham, Sunderland, South Shields, Hartlepool, Redcar, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Craster, Seahouses or Bamburgh.
9. Examples include Newcastle United, Sunderland AFC, Middlesbrough FC and Hartlepool United.
10. Every answer is the right answer.



# Chapter Two

## Down the Pit

**Coal Mining and Communities That Built the North East**

***"Coal was more than a job, it shaped families, friendships and entire communities."***

For well over two hundred years, coal mining was at the heart of life for many communities across the North East. Thousands of people worked in the pits, while thousands more supported mining life through shops, schools, transport, healthcare and family life.

For many families, mining was a tradition passed from one generation to the next. Grandfathers, fathers, sons, brothers, uncles and neighbours often worked at the same colliery. Some young men left school at fourteen or fifteen and followed family members into the pit, while others chose different paths, but the pit remained at the centre of village life.



**Underground Coal Mine**

Coal from the North East travelled across Britain and around the world. It heated homes, powered factories, fuelled steam engines and helped ships sail across the seas. Without coal, much of Britain's industrial growth would not have been possible.

Yet behind every ton of coal were people, hard-working individuals who faced long shifts, physically demanding work and significant dangers underground. Families knew that every working day carried risks, and communities supported one another through both celebration and hardship.

## Life in a Pit Village

Mining villages were often close-knit communities where neighbours looked after one another. Children played together in the streets, families attended local churches and chapels, and community halls were busy with dances, concerts, sports clubs and social events.

Many people remember washing lines stretching across back lanes, rows of terraced houses, coal fires keeping homes warm in winter and the familiar sound of clogs or boots returning home at the end of a shift.

People often recall the smell of coal smoke on cold mornings, the whistle signalling the start or end of a shift and the sight of miners walking together to work before sunrise.
The Important Role of Women
Although most miners were men, women were the heart of many mining communities.



Mothers, wives, daughters and grandmothers managed households, cared for children and older relatives, stretched household budgets and supported neighbours through good times and difficult ones. Many women also worked outside the home in shops, schools, hospitals, factories or offices.

When communities faced hardship, women frequently organised fundraising events, community meals, clothing collections and social activities. Their contribution was enormous and deserves to be remembered and celebrated.

## Brass Bands and Community Spirit

Music has always played an important role in the North East.
Many collieries had their own brass band. These bands performed at village events, church services, parades, miners' galas and competitions. Their music became the soundtrack to community life and continues to bring people together today.

Even people who never worked in mining often have memories of hearing brass bands playing in parks or during local celebrations.

# Chapter Two

## The Durham Miners' Gala

One of the best-known traditions in the North East is the Durham Miners' Gala, affectionately known as "The Big Meeting."

For generations, communities travelled to Durham carrying colourful banners celebrating their villages, workplaces and shared values. Brass bands filled the streets with music while families and friends gathered together.

For many people, attending the Gala was about much more than mining. It was an opportunity to meet old friends, enjoy music, share food and celebrate community.

## A Memory Box Activity

Gather together a few objects or photographs such as:

- A flat cap
- A cloth lunch bag
- An enamel mug
- A miner's lamp or photograph
- A brass band photograph
- A piece of coal
- Old work boots
- A railway ticket
- A newspaper featuring mining stories
- A colliery banner photograph

Invite people to handle objects where appropriate and describe what they notice.

## Let's Talk Together

- Invite conversation using gentle, open questions.
- Did anyone in your family work in mining?
- What jobs did people do where you lived?
- Do you remember hearing the pit whistle?
- What games did children play after school?
- Did your community have a brass band?
- What celebrations brought everyone together?
- Who was the best storyteller in your family?
- What smells remind you of home?
- Did your family have a coal fire?
- Who looked after you when you were young?

Remember, some people may never have lived in a mining community.

## Did You Know?

- Some mines reached hundreds of metres below the ground.
- Pit ponies worked underground for many years, helping to pull tubs of coal.
- Safety lamps were developed to reduce the risk of explosions caused by gases.
- Coal was transported by railways, canals and ships to homes and industries across Britain and beyond.

Many former pit villages continue to celebrate their heritage through museums, community events and local history groups.

**South Durham coal miners at work at the, 1871**



**Ask:**
"What do you think this might have been used for?"
"What memories does it bring to mind?"
"What would you like to tell younger people about life then?"

# Chapter Two

## A Group Activity

Invite everyone to imagine they are creating a "Village Memory Map." Using a large sheet of paper, draw a simple street.

Ask participants where they would like to place familiar places from their memories.

**Suggestions might include:**

- Home
- School
- Chapel or church
- The Co-op
- The fish and chip shop
- The working men's club
- The allotments
- The football field
- The village hall
- The bus stop
- The corner shop
- The park

As people contribute, encourage them to share stories about the places they remember. There is no need for the map to be accurate, it is the conversations that matter most.

**Reflection**

**Communities are built by people, not buildings.**
**Whether someone worked underground, taught in the local school, cared for children, ran a shop, drove a bus or kept the home fires burning, every contribution helped shape the rich story of the North East.**



## Tea Break Quiz

1. What fuel was mined deep underground in many North East communities?
2. What animal helped move coal underground?
3. What type of band is closely linked with many mining communities?
4. What is the nickname for the Durham Miners' Gala?
5. What kept many homes warm before central heating became common?
6. True or False? Whole families often lived in mining villages.
7. Name one quality that people often associate with mining communities.
8. What was usually carried by mining communities during the Durham Gala procession?
9. Can you name a former mining village or town in the North East?
10. What memory from your own working life makes you smile?

**Encourage conversation rather than competition.**
**People may enjoy answering together.**

## Quiz Answers

1. Coal
2. Pit pony
3. Brass band
4. The Big Meeting
5. Coal fire
6. True
7. Examples include friendship, resilience, kindness, teamwork, determination or community spirit.
8. A colliery banner
9. Many answers are possible, including Ashington, Easington, Horden, Chopwell, Dawdon, Murton, Seaham, Shildon, Stanley and many others.
10. Every answer is unique and equally valuable.

# Chapter Three

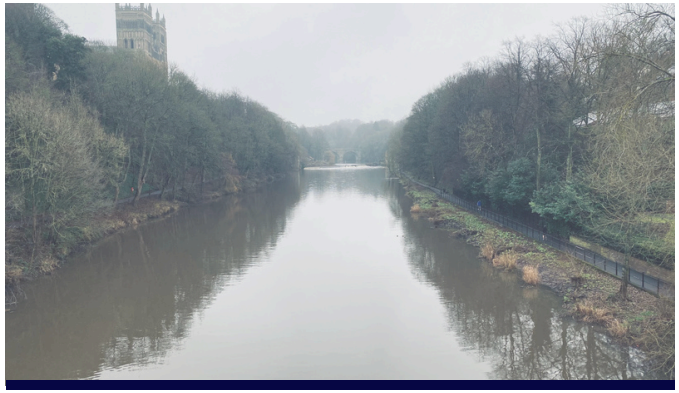
## Building the World

**Shipbuilding, Rivers and Engineering**

***"The rivers carried ships, hopes, skills and stories of generations."***

Stand beside the River Tyne, the River Wear or the River Tees and it is easy to imagine a time when the banks were alive with activity. The sound of hammers echoed through the air, cranes towered overhead, sparks flew from welders at work and the mighty hulls of ships slowly took shape.

For generations, the North East became known throughout the world for its shipbuilding and engineering. Ships built here sailed to every continent, carrying passengers, cargo and crews across oceans. They were admired for their quality, strength and craftsmanship.



**The River Wear in Durham City**

Some people designed engines. Others cut steel, drove rivets or worked with timber. Office staff organised paperwork, apprentices learned their trade, cleaners kept workplaces tidy, cooks prepared meals and families supported loved ones working long shifts. Every person played an important part.

## A Skill Passed Through Generations

Many young people left school and began apprenticeships in the shipyards or engineering works. Experienced workers patiently passed on their knowledge to the next generation. Learning a trade took time.

Apprentices discovered how to use tools safely, measure accurately and take pride in producing work of the highest standard. There was often a strong sense of teamwork. Everyone relied on one another.

### The Launch of a Ship

Launching a new ship was a moment of great excitement.

Crowds gathered along the riverbanks to watch as the completed vessel slid gracefully into the water for the very first time. Families dressed in their best clothes and children perched on shoulders for a better view.

Bands played, speeches were made and cameras captured the occasion.



**The River Tyne**

For those who had worked on the ship, it was a proud day. They could point across the river and say, "I helped build that."

## The Rivers That Shaped a Region

The River Tyne has long been associated with Newcastle and Gateshead.

The River Wear flows through Sunderland and County Durham.

The River Tees links communities including Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool.

These rivers brought trade, employment and prosperity. They also created beautiful places for walking, fishing, rowing and simply enjoying the changing seasons.

Many people remember crossing the famous bridges, watching boats on the river or feeding ducks with family members.

# Chapter Three

## Engineering Excellence

The North East has produced remarkable engineers and inventors whose ideas changed everyday life.

Railways, bridges, steam engines and heavy engineering all flourished here. The skills developed in local workshops helped shape modern Britain and influenced engineering across the world.
Even today, many families remain proud of relatives who worked in engineering, manufacturing and construction.

## Women at Work

During the Second World War, many women took on engineering and manufacturing roles that had previously been carried out mainly by men.
Women worked in factories, offices, transport services and hospitals, demonstrating remarkable skill, determination and resilience.

Their contribution helped keep communities functioning during difficult times and deserves to be remembered alongside the achievements of those working in the shipyards.

## Let's Talk Together

- Encourage conversation with gentle, open questions.
- Did anyone in your family work in a shipyard or engineering works?
- What was your first job?
- Did you ever complete an apprenticeship?
- What tools do you remember using?
- What jobs were important where you lived?
- Do you remember seeing ships being launched?
- Which bridge did you cross most often?
- Did you travel by ferry?
- Who taught you practical skills?
- What are you most proud of from your working life?

Remember that every occupation matters. Whether someone worked in healthcare, education, farming, retail, transport, the armed forces or at home raising a family, every story is worth sharing.

## Did You Know?

- The North East built many famous ships that sailed around the world.
- The region became internationally recognised for engineering, steelmaking and heavy industry.
- Apprenticeships often lasted several years and combined practical work with learning new skills.
- The iconic bridges across the River Tyne are recognised around the world.

Thousands of local families had connections with shipbuilding, engineering or industries supporting them

**Bridges across the River Tyne**



# Chapter Three

## Object Reminiscence

Place familiar objects on a table.

Suggestions include:

- Measuring tape
- Spanner
- Wooden ruler
- Steel lunch box
- Hard hat
- Protective gloves
- Blueprint or technical drawing
- Old engineering catalogue
- Postcard showing a ship launch
- Ferry ticket

Invite people to choose an object that interests them.

**Ask:**
"What might this remind you of?"
"What skills did people need?"
"Who taught you practical skills when you were younger?"

## Creative Activity

### Build a Ship Together

Using large sheets of paper, invite the group to draw the outline of a large ship.
Ask each person to add something to the picture.

**Ideas include:**

- Smoke from the funnel
- Flags
- Lifeboats
- Seagulls
- The river
- Family members waving
- Dockside cranes
- A favourite colour
- A name for the ship

This activity encourages teamwork and conversation rather than artistic skill.

## Reflection

The North East did not become famous because of machines alone. It became famous because ordinary people brought extraordinary skill, determination and pride to their work every single day.

Those qualities continue to shape our communities today.
Every person's working life, whether in a shipyard, school, hospital, shop, farm, office, factory or home, has contributed to the story of the North East.



## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which three rivers are closely linked with the North East's shipbuilding history?
2. What is an apprentice?
3. What happens when a newly built ship is launched?
4. Name one famous bridge across the River Tyne.
5. True or False? Thousands of people worked together to build large ships.
6. What qualities are important when learning a skilled trade?
7. Can you name someone who taught you something useful?
8. What job would you most like younger generations to understand?
9. Which river flows through Sunderland?
10. What makes a good team?

## Quiz Answers

1. The Tyne, Wear and Tees.
2. Someone learning a skilled trade while working.
3. It enters the water for the first time.
4. Examples include the Tyne Bridge, High Level Bridge, Swing Bridge, Millennium Bridge or Queen Elizabeth II Bridge.
5. True.
6. Examples include patience, teamwork, practice, care and determination.
7. Every answer is personal and valuable.
8. Every occupation deserves recognition.
9. The River Wear.
10. Answers might include kindness, communication, trust, respect and helping one another.

# Chapter Four

## School Days and Growing Up in the North East

***"Do You Remember When the School Bell Rang?"***

***"Every childhood is different, but every childhood has stories worth sharing."***

For many older people, childhood memories remain some of the strongest and most treasured. A familiar smell, an old photograph, the sound of a playground rhyme or the sight of a school desk can bring back memories that have been tucked away for decades.

Children growing up in the North East during the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s experienced enormous changes. Some remembered wartime, rationing and evacuation. Others remembered the excitement of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, the arrival of television or holidays that became possible as family life changed.



**Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II**

Some children walked long distances to school in all weathers, often with brothers, sisters or neighbours. Many schools had coal fires or radiators that never quite seemed warm enough in winter. Wet coats hung on pegs in the corridor, and the smell of chalk dust, polish and school dinners filled the building.

Teachers were often addressed as "Sir" or "Miss," and classrooms were usually arranged in neat rows of wooden desks. Exercise books were carefully covered, handwriting was practised every day and many children learned their times tables by heart.

For some people, school was a place of friendship, learning and encouragement. Others found it more difficult or left school early to begin work or help support their family. Every experience is equally valid.

## Playtime

The playground was often the happiest part of the day.

Without mobile phones or computers, children created games using imagination, teamwork and whatever was close at hand.

**Favourite playground games included:**

- Hopscotch
- Skipping
- Tig
- Hide and seek
- Marbles
- Conkers
- Five stones
- Two-ball
- British Bulldog (where permitted)
- Football with jumpers for goalposts



Children often made up their own rules, and arguments about whether someone was "out" could be settled just as quickly as they began!

Many older people remember making toys from everyday objects or creating adventures outdoors. A stick might become a fishing rod, a sword or a walking cane, all in the same afternoon.

# Chapter Four

## School Dinners

School meals are remembered with great affection and sometimes a smile!

**Many people recall:**

- Liver and onions
- Mince and potatoes
- Cottage pie
- Stew
- Rice pudding
- Semolina
- Tapioca
- Jam roly-poly
- Treacle sponge
- Custard
- Chocolate concrete with pink custard
- Corned beef pie

Everyone seems to have a favourite, or least favourite!

Food often sparks wonderful conversations, and people may enjoy comparing recipes or remembering who was the best cook in the family.



**Jam Roly-Poly**

## Walking Home

After school, many children hurried home for tea before disappearing outside again until it became dark.

Parents often had only one rule:
***"Be home when the streetlights come on!"***

Children climbed trees, built dens, played football, collected conkers, explored fields and streams or simply chatted with friends on the street corner.

Many people remember feeling safe because neighbours looked after one another.

## Favourite Treats

Although money was often limited, small treats were greatly appreciated.

People may remember buying:

- Sherbet lemons
- Pear drops
- Mint humbugs
- Aniseed balls
- Liquorice sticks
- Toffee
- Black Jacks
- Fruit Salad chews
- Gobstoppers
- Lucky bags

Sometimes a few pennies felt like a fortune

## Comics and Stories

Reading was an important pastime.

Favourite comics often included:

- The Beano
- The Dandy
- Eagle
- Bunty
- Jackie (later years)

Libraries also played an important role, allowing children to borrow books and discover new adventures.



# Chapter Four

## Sensory Reminiscence

Create a "School Desk Memory Box."
Ideas include:

- Chalk
- Slate
- Pencil case
- Wooden ruler
- Ink bottle (empty)
- Exercise book
- Marbles
- Skipping rope
- Small bell
- School photograph
- Library ticket

Invite people to hold an object and describe what it reminds them of.

## Let's Talk Together

- Invite people to share whatever they feel comfortable discussing.
- What was your school called?
- How did you travel to school?
- Who was your favourite teacher?
- Did you enjoy playtime?
- What games did you play?
- Did you have a favourite lesson?
- What did you enjoy reading?
- What was your favourite school dinner?
- Were there any school trips you remember?
- What advice would you give your younger self?

Allow plenty of time for conversation and follow the person's interests.

## Did You Know?

- Many children wrote using fountain pens before ballpoint pens became common.
- • Milk was often provided at school in small glass bottles.
- • Class sizes of forty or more pupils were not unusual.
- • School assemblies often included singing together.
- • Some children wore hand-knitted jumpers and clothes made or mended at home.

**Old school classroom**



# Chapter Four

## Group Activity

### Favourite Childhood Games

Invite everyone to work together to create a list of games they remember. Write each suggestion on a large sheet of paper.

**Ask:**

- Which game was the most popular?
- Which game needed the most players?
- Which game made everyone laugh?
- Could younger people still enjoy these games today?

This activity often encourages conversation between generations if family members or volunteers are present.



## Reflection

Childhood is not measured by how much someone owned.

It is often remembered through friendships, family, imagination, favourite places and the people who helped us grow.

Whether someone remembers a village school, a city classroom, a rural lane or a busy playground, those memories are part of the rich and varied story of the North East.

## Tea Break Quiz

1. **What game is played by hopping through numbered squares?**
2. **What was often served with jam roly-poly?**
3. **What did many children collect from horse chestnut trees in autumn?**
4. **Which comic featured Dennis the Menace?**
5. **What was commonly written on classroom blackboards?**
6. **What usually told everyone it was time for lessons to begin?**
7. **Name one traditional playground game.**
8. **How did most children carry their books?**
9. **What sweet did you enjoy most as a child?**
10. **What made your childhood special?**

## Quiz Answers

1. **Hopscotch**
2. **Custard**
3. **Conkers**
4. **The Beano**
5. **Chalk**
6. **The school bell**
7. **Many answers are correct.**
8. **School bag or satchel**
9. **Every answer is personal.**
10. **Every memory shared is valuable.**



# Chapter Five

## Home, Family and Everyday Life

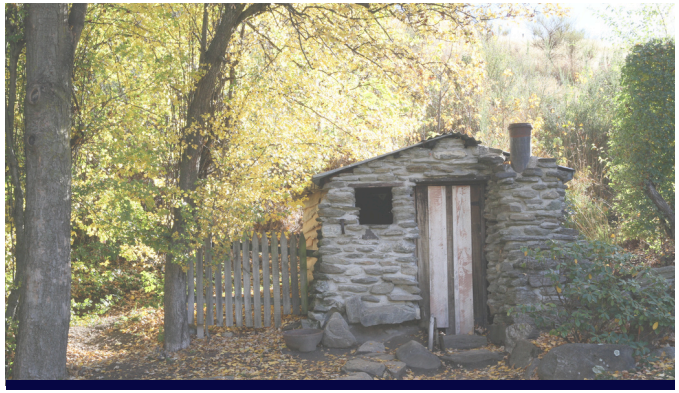
***"There's Nowt Like a North East Home"***

"Home isn't just a house. It's the people, the smells, the sounds and the memories we carry with us."

Ask someone to describe their childhood home and you will often hear much more than bricks and mortar.

People remember the warmth of the fire on a cold winter evening. They remember the smell of bread baking, washing drying by the range, Sunday dinner cooking or polish on the kitchen floor before visitors arrived.

Across the North East, homes were as varied as the people who lived in them.



**Miners Cottage**

Some families lived in miners' cottages in places like Ashington, Horden or Easington. Others lived in terraced streets in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland or Middlesbrough. Some grew up in fishing villages such as Craster, Seahouses or Cullercoats, while others were raised on farms across Northumberland, Weardale or Teesdale. Whatever the setting, home was where family life happened.

The Heart of the House
For many people, the kitchen was the busiest room.

It was where meals were cooked, homework was completed, knitting was done, neighbours called in "just for five minutes," and cups of tea somehow appeared without anyone asking.



**Coal Scuttle**

Children often sat at the kitchen table colouring, helping to shell peas, peel potatoes or polish shoes for school the next day. Grandparents might tell stories while mending clothes or preparing vegetables. Visitors rarely needed an invitation. The kettle simply went on.

## The Coal Fire

Many North East homes were heated by coal fires.
Lighting the fire each morning was part of everyday life.

Children often remember watching flames dance behind the fireguard while toast was made on a toasting fork or crumpets were warmed by the grate.

Coal scuttles stood beside the fireplace.
Ash had to be cleared.
The chimney was swept.

These jobs were simply part of family life.
Many people also remember drying clothes beside the fire or warming chilly feet after playing outside.

# Chapter Five

## Let's Talk Together

Invite conversation with gentle questions.

- What was your wedding day like?
- Do you remember seeing weddings in your street?
- Did your family have any special traditions?
- How did you celebrate birthdays?
- What do you remember about Christmas when you were young?
- How did your family celebrate New Year's Eve?
- Did you enjoy Bonfire Night?
- Did you attend church fêtes, village carnivals or community celebrations?
- Which family celebration makes you smile most when you think about it?

Every family celebrated in its own way, and every memory is worth sharing.

## Wash Day

Before automatic washing machines became common, washing clothes took time and hard work.

Monday was often known as wash day.
Water was heated, clothes were scrubbed by hand or washed using a mangle before being hung outside on the washing line.

Many people remember seeing long rows of white sheets blowing in the North East breeze.

Children sometimes ran between the sheets while helping, or pretending to help!

## The Corner Shop

Every neighbourhood seemed to have its favourite shop.

The local baker knew everyone's name.
The butcher might put something aside for a regular customer.

Children were trusted to fetch bread, milk or sugar with a few coins carefully wrapped in a handkerchief.

Many people remember shopping at the Co-op and collecting "divi" stamps, visiting the greengrocer, fishmonger or sweet shop, where every penny counted.




Corner Shop

# Chapter Five

## Sundays

Sunday often had its own rhythm.

Many families attended church or chapel before returning home for a special meal.

Roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, vegetables and gravy filled many dining tables, while others enjoyed lamb, chicken or a hearty stew.

After dinner came pudding, cups of tea and perhaps a walk along the coast at Seaburn, Roker, Tynemouth, Saltburn or Redcar.

Some families travelled to visit grandparents, while others settled down to listen to the wireless or later watched television together.

Whatever people did, Sunday often felt different from the rest of the week.

## Family Celebrations

Across the North East, family celebrations brought neighbours, friends and whole communities together. Whether it was a wedding, christening, birthday, Christmas, New Year or Bonfire Night, these occasions created memories that lasted a lifetime.

Many people remember the excitement of seeing a bride leave her family home while neighbours lined the street to admire her dress. Christenings often brought several generations together, followed by family gatherings filled with laughter, homemade food and plenty of cups of tea.

Children looked forward to Christmas carol singing, collecting "a penny for the Guy", Bonfire Night celebrations, village fêtes, church fairs and local carnivals. New Year's Eve was another special occasion, with families staying up to welcome the new year, singing Auld Lang Syne and opening the door at midnight to let the old year out and the new one in.

Working men's clubs, church halls and village institutes regularly hosted dances, parties, concerts and community celebrations where friendships were strengthened and new memories were made.




## North East Hospitality

- One thing visitors often noticed about the North East was the warm welcome.
- Neighbours looked after one another.
- If someone was poorly, meals appeared.
- If snow fell heavily, people helped clear paths.
- If a family celebrated a wedding, christening or new baby, everyone shared in the happiness.
- Community was simply part of everyday life.

## Let's Talk Together

Take your time and invite conversation.

- What was your home like when you were growing up?
- Who usually did the cooking?
- Can you remember the smell of your kitchen?
- Did your family have a coal fire?
- Which local shops did you visit?
- Did you collect Co-op dividend stamps?
- Who made the best Sunday dinner?
- Did neighbours leave their doors unlocked?
- Who always made you feel welcome?
- What made your house feel like home?

Every answer tells part of a person's story.

# Chapter Five

## Did You Know?

- The Co-operative Society's "Dividend" or "Divi" was collected by millions of families across the North East, helping household budgets go a little further.

- Newcastle Brown Ale, first brewed in Newcastle in 1927, became one of the region's best-known exports and was enjoyed by many people at family celebrations and social clubs.

- Stottie cakes, baked in North East bakeries, remain one of the region's best-loved traditional foods.

- Many older terraced streets had outside toilets and shared back lanes, where neighbours chatted while hanging out washing or children played together.

- "Gan yem" ("go home") and "Howay!" ("come on!") are just two examples of phrases still heard across parts of the North East today.

## North East Memory Box

Collect together everyday objects that people may recognise.

**Ideas include:**

- A Co-op dividend stamp book
- A Stottie cake (or photograph)
- A flat iron
- Wooden clothes pegs
- A washboard
- A coal scuttle (or photograph)
- An enamel teapot
- A Bluebird Toffee wrapper
- A bottle of Camp Coffee essence
- A ration book (replica)
- A local newspaper from years gone by

**Ask gently:**
"What would you use first?"
"Which object feels most familiar?"
"What story does it remind you of?"

There is no expectation that people identify every object correctly.



## Tea Break Quiz

1. What was collected at many Co-op shops to earn a dividend?
2. What traditional North East bread is round and flat?
3. What was often used to heat homes before central heating?
4. Which jobs might be done on a traditional wash day?
5. Name one seaside town where North East families enjoyed day trips.
6. Which room was often called the heart of the home?
7. What drink was almost always offered to visitors?
8. Can you name a favourite local bakery, butcher or shop from your own area?
9. What smell reminds you most of home?
10. If you could step back into your childhood kitchen for five minutes, what would you hope to find there?

## Quiz Answers

1. Dividend ("Divi") stamps.
2. A stottie cake.
3. A coal fire.
4. Washing, mangling, rinsing, hanging clothes out or ironing.
5. Many answers are possible, including Whitley Bay, Tynemouth, South Shields, Seaburn, Roker, Seaham, Hartlepool, Redcar, Saltburn, Craster, Bamburgh and Seahouses.
6. The kitchen.
7. A cup of tea.

8–10. Every answer is personal and equally important

# Chapter Five

## Activity Together

### Our North East Kitchen

On a large sheet of paper, draw the outline of an old-fashioned kitchen. Invite everyone to add something they remember.

**Suggestions might include:**

- A black range or cooker
- A kettle
- A teapot
- A bread bin
- A pantry
- A scrubbed wooden table
- A mangle
- A baking tray
- A clock
- A wireless
- A cat asleep by the fire
- A bunch of flowers from the garden

As each item is added, ask if it reminds anyone of a person, a place or a family tradition.

## Reflection

Homes across the North East came in many shapes and sizes.
Some overlooked busy shipyards.
Some stood beside pit heaps.
Some faced fishing harbours.
Others looked across open fields, moorland or market squares.
What made them special was never the building itself.
It was the people who filled them with love, laughter, hard work, kindness and countless everyday moments that became lifelong memories.

Those memories continue to connect us today.



# Chapter Six

## Beside the Seaside

**North East Beaches, Harbours and Family Holidays**

***"You didn't always need to travel far for a wonderful holiday. Some of the happiest memories were made just a few miles from home."***

For generations of North East families, the seaside was somewhere special. Whether it was a Sunday afternoon outing, a works trip, the annual "Wakes Week" holiday or simply a day spent building sandcastles, the coast has always held a special place in people's hearts.

Stretching from the dramatic cliffs of Northumberland to the beaches of Teesside, the North East coastline is one of the most beautiful in Britain.

Each town and village has its own character, traditions and memories.

### Whitley Bay

For many families, Whitley Bay was the place to visit.

People remember walking along the promenade with an ice cream, paddling in the sea, visiting the amusement arcades or watching the waves crash against the shore on windy days.

Spanish City, with its famous white dome, became one of the North East's best-loved landmarks. Families enjoyed ballroom dancing, fairground rides, concerts and afternoon tea.

Many grandparents still smile when they remember dressing in their best clothes for a special trip there.

### Tynemouth

Tynemouth has long been a favourite destination.

Families explored the castle and priory, searched for shells on Longsands Beach or enjoyed fish and chips overlooking the sea.

Some remember watching fishing boats return to the harbour, while others enjoyed the busy market or simply sitting on a bench listening to the gulls.

### South Shields

The golden sands of South Shields have welcomed visitors for generations.
Children built sandcastles, collected shells and searched for tiny crabs in rock pools.

The fairground, donkey rides and seaside treats created memories that lasted a lifetime.

Many people remember taking the ferry across the River Tyne before heading to the beach.

### Seaburn and Roker

For families in Sunderland and County Durham, Seaburn and Roker were favourite destinations.

Walking along the promenade, enjoying fish and chips wrapped in paper, watching the lighthouse or collecting sea glass remain treasured memories for many people.

The illuminations attracted visitors from across the region, while Sunday evening drives along the seafront became a tradition for countless families.
Seaham

Once known for its busy harbour and coal exports, Seaham is also famous today for colourful sea glass washed smooth by the waves.

People still enjoy searching the beach for these beautiful pieces of history.
Many older people remember the harbour bustling with activity or relatives who worked nearby.

### Craster

The small fishing village of Craster is famous for its traditional smoked kippers.
The smell from the smokehouses has greeted visitors for generations.

Nearby Dunstanburgh Castle stands proudly on the coastline, creating one of Northumberland's most recognisable views.



South Shields

# Chapter Six

## Cullercoats

Nestled between Whitley Bay and Tynemouth, Cullercoats is one of the North East's most picturesque and historic seaside villages. Although smaller than its neighbouring towns, it has a unique character and a rich maritime heritage that has made it a much-loved destination for generations of local people and visitors alike.

At the heart of the village is Cullercoats Bay, a beautiful horseshoe-shaped sandy beach enclosed by sturdy stone piers and sea walls. A narrow entrance allows fishing boats and lifeboats to enter the harbour while helping to shelter the bay from the open North Sea.

Because of its sheltered position, the beach has long been popular with families. Children have paddled, built sandcastles and searched for shells and rock pools here for many decades, while the calmer waters have often felt safer than the more exposed beaches at nearby Whitley Bay or Tynemouth.

The harbour has been central to village life for centuries. Cullercoats was once a thriving fishing community, with cobles setting out to sea each day in search of herring, cod and other fish. Although only a handful of small fishing boats remain today, the village's fishing heritage is still evident around the harbour.

One of Cullercoats' proudest traditions is its RNLI lifeboat station. Lifeboat crews have rescued countless people from the often unpredictable North Sea, continuing a long history of courage, skill and community service. The lifeboat station remains an important part of village life and a reminder of the close relationship between the people of Cullercoats and the sea.

The village itself has a welcoming atmosphere, with a selection of independent shops, cafés, restaurants and the much-loved fish and chip shop overlooking the coast. For many local families, a visit to Cullercoats would not be complete without enjoying fish and chips by the sea or an ice cream while watching the boats in the harbour.

At the southern end of the village stands St George's Church, built in the late nineteenth century. Its tall tower has long served as a landmark for sailors approaching the coast and can be seen from many miles out at sea. The church remains one of the defining features of the village skyline. During the Victorian era, Cullercoats became famous through the paintings of the Cullercoats Artists, a group of British and European painters who were inspired by the hardworking fishing community, particularly the local fisherwomen in their distinctive traditional clothing. Their artwork helped make Cullercoats known far beyond the North East and preserved an important record of village life during the nineteenth century.

Today, Cullercoats remains a peaceful seaside village where visitors come to enjoy its sandy bay, coastal walks, colourful fishing heritage and friendly atmosphere. It continues to be a place where generations of families have made happy seaside memories.

## Reminiscence Questions

1. Have you ever visited Cullercoats? What do enjoy most about the village?
2. Did your family ever spend days at the seaside building sandcastles, paddling or collecting shells?
3. Did you eat fish and chips by the sea or have a favourite seaside treat?
4. Have you ever watched a lifeboat launch or seen fishing boats coming into harbour? What was it like?
5. What are your happiest memories of visiting the North East coast with family or friends?



# Chapter Six

## Seahouses and the Farne Islands

Seahouses has always been a popular place for family holidays. Boat trips to the Farne Islands gave visitors the chance to see puffins, seals and seabirds.

For many children, it was their very first trip on a boat.

## Bamburgh

Few places capture the imagination quite like Bamburgh. Its magnificent castle overlooks miles of golden sand. Many families remember picnics on the beach, flying kites, exploring rock pools or simply enjoying the fresh sea air.

## Hartlepool

Hartlepool's historic docks tell the story of centuries of maritime life. Families remember visiting the marina, enjoying the beach or watching fishing boats come and go.

Many local people have stories connected with the fishing industry, merchant navy or engineering.

## Redcar and Saltburn

For families across Teesside, Redcar and Saltburn were favourite seaside destinations.

People remember riding the Saltburn Cliff Lift, walking along Redcar's promenade, eating lemon tops, visiting the pier or spending hours collecting shells.

The sound of the waves, the smell of fish and chips and the cry of seagulls remain familiar to many.

## Let's Talk Together

Everyone's memories are different.

Invite conversation with gentle questions.

- Which North East beach did you visit most often?
- Who usually came with you?
- Did you travel by bus, train or car?
- What was always packed in the picnic basket?
- Did anyone paddle in the sea, whatever the weather?
- Did you collect shells or interesting stones?
- What seaside treat did you always choose?
- Can you remember your first visit to the coast?
- Which beach still feels special to you?
- If you could spend one more afternoon beside the sea, where would you choose?

## Did You Know?

- The Northumberland Coast is recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as a National Landscape), celebrated for its wildlife, beaches and historic castles.
- Puffins visit the Farne Islands every spring and early summer, attracting visitors from around the world.
- Grace Darling, from Bamburgh, became a Victorian heroine after helping rescue survivors from the wreck of the Forfarshire in 1838.
- The South Shields Ferry has carried passengers across the River Tyne for generations and remains an important part of local life.
- Saltburn Cliff Lift, opened in 1884, is Britain's oldest water-balanced cliff lift still in operation.

**Hartlepool town, County Durham, England**



# Chapter Six

## North East Memory Box

Place a selection of seaside objects on a table.

Ideas include:

- A bucket and spade
- Seashells
- Smooth sea glass from Seaham
- A postcard of Whitley Bay or Redcar
- A stick of rock
- A fishing net float
- A lighthouse photograph
- A toy boat
- A railway ticket to the coast
- A picnic blanket

**Ask:**
"What would you pick up first?"
"What does it remind you of?"
"Who would you have spent the day with?"

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which famous white-domed building stands at Whitley Bay?
2. Which Northumberland village is famous for smoked kippers?
3. What colourful treasure do people search for on Seaham beach?
4. Which islands are famous for puffins and seals?
5. What is the name of the historic castle overlooking Bamburgh beach?
6. Which ferry crosses the River Tyne?
7. Where can you ride Britain's oldest water-balanced cliff lift?
8. Name a favourite North East seaside town.
9. What treat did you always enjoy at the seaside?
10. What is your happiest memory of a North East beach?

## Quiz Answers

1. Spanish City
2. Craster
3. Sea glass
4. The Farne Islands
5. Bamburgh Castle
6. The Shields Ferry
7. Saltburn
8. Many answers are correct.

9–10. Every answer is personal.





## Activity Together

**Our Favourite Places by the Sea**

- Provide a large outline map of the North East coastline.
- Invite everyone to place a coloured sticker or draw a small heart beside somewhere that means something to them.
- Encourage people to tell the story behind their choice.
- Perhaps it was where they became engaged.
- Where the family always bought fish and chips.
- Where children learned to swim.
- Where grandparents lived.
- Or simply where they felt happiest.
- Every place has a story.
- Every story deserves to be shared

## Reflection

- The North East coastline has witnessed countless family moments.
- First paddles in the sea.
- Children chasing waves.
- Picnics wrapped in newspaper.
- Ice creams melting faster than they could be eaten.
- Bracing walks on crisp winter mornings.
- Fish and chips shared on a bench overlooking the water.
- For many people, these are not simply memories of places.
- They are memories of love, laughter, family and belonging.
- Long after the sand has been washed away by the tide, those memories remain.

# Chapter Seven

## A Taste of the North East

Traditional Food, Family Recipes and Mealtime Memories
"Sometimes all it takes is the smell of baking bread or a pot of soup to bring back a lifetime of memories."

Across the North East, family recipes have been handed down through generations. Some meals were made from simple, inexpensive ingredients, while others were saved for birthdays, Christmas or special family celebrations. Whatever was on the table, mealtimes were often about much more than food, they were a chance to catch up, tell stories and enjoy one another's company.

Many people remember baking with parents or grandparents, helping to stir a pudding mixture, peeling potatoes for Sunday dinner or waiting eagerly for a favourite treat to come out of the oven. Every family had its own traditions. There is no single "North East menu", and that is part of what makes our region so special.

## The Famous Stottie

Few foods are as closely linked with the North East as the stottie.

A stottie is a large, round, flat loaf with a soft centre and a chewy crust. It was filling, practical and perfect for busy working families. People enjoyed stotties filled with:

- Ham and pease pudding
- Bacon
- Sausage
- Cheese
- Corned beef
- Egg
- Jam
- Dripping



## Pease Pudding

The old saying goes:
***"Pease pudding hot, pease pudding cold, pease pudding in the pot, nine days old."***

Made from split yellow peas, pease pudding has been enjoyed across the North East for generations. Served with cooked ham, it remains one of the region's best-loved traditional dishes. Some families made their own, while others bought it from the local butcher.

## Pan Haggerty

This comforting dish combines sliced potatoes, onions and cheese, slowly cooked until golden. Every family seems to have their own version.
Some add bacon. Some use different cheeses. Others insist there is only one proper recipe! That is often the start of a wonderful conversation.

## Singin' Hinnies

Despite the unusual name, Singin' Hinnies are delicious griddle cakes made with flour, butter and dried fruit. They are said to "sing" as they cook in the pan. Served warm with butter and a cup of tea, they remain a favourite afternoon treat.

# Chapter Seven

## Craster Kippers

The village of Craster has become famous for its smoked kippers.

For generations, smokehouses have prepared fish using traditional methods.
People often remember the distinctive smell drifting through the harbour as much as the taste itself.

## Sweet Treats

Many North East families remember enjoying:

- Rice pudding
- Bread and butter pudding
- Treacle tart
- Apple pie
- Rhubarb crumble
- Yorkshire curd tart
- Gingerbread
- Parkin
- Home-made jam tarts

Often these puddings were served with warm custard.

There is still friendly debate about which pudding is the best!

## Afternoon Tea

A pot of tea has always been central to North East hospitality. Whether welcoming neighbours, celebrating good news or offering comfort during difficult times, tea often appeared alongside:

- Fruit cake
- Scones
- Biscuits
- Sandwiches
- Homemade buns

The invitation "Put the kettle on" has brought people together for generations.



## Let's Talk Together

- Invite conversation without expecting anyone to remember specific facts.
- Who taught you to cook?
- What was your favourite family meal?
- Who made the best Sunday dinner?
- What smells remind you of home?
- Did anyone grow vegetables in the garden or on an allotment?
- Which local bakery did your family visit?
- Was there a recipe everyone asked for?
- What did you enjoy eating at the seaside?
- Did you help prepare Christmas dinner?
- If you could taste one meal from childhood again, what would you choose?

Every family has its own traditions.
Every recipe has its own story.

## Did You Know?

- Northumberland cheese has been produced for centuries and is still made today.
- Allotments have long been part of North East communities, providing fresh vegetables, fruit and flowers.
- Many families kept rhubarb plants in the garden, using them in crumbles, pies and jams.
- Local markets such as those in Hexham, Alnwick, Durham, Stockton and Barnard Castle have supplied fresh produce for generations.
- Fish and chips became a popular Friday tradition in many North East households.



# Chapter Seven

## North East Voices

You might hear some of these familiar words around the region:

- Bait – A packed lunch.
- Canny – Nice, pleasant or good.
- Clarty – Muddy.
- Hinny – A friendly word meaning "dear" or "love".
- Howay! – Come on!
- Whey aye! – Of course! Certainly!
- Haddaway! – Don't be silly! Go away!
- Divn't – Don't.
- Wor – Our.
- Gan yem – Go home.

**Ask**:
"Did your family use any of these expressions?"
"Were there words that only people in your town seemed to say?"
"Which sayings do you still use today?"

People often enjoy comparing the different dialects spoken across Northumberland, County Durham, Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside. These conversations can be especially helpful for staff and volunteers who are less familiar with local language.

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which traditional North East loaf is round and flat?
2. What is pease pudding made from?
3. Which village is famous for smoked kippers?
4. What hot drink is often offered to visitors?
5. What vegetable is commonly used in rhubarb crumble?
6. Which meal is often enjoyed with ham?
7. What does the word "bait" mean in parts of the North East?
8. Can you name a North East market town?
9. Which pudding was your favourite?
10. Which family recipe would you like to pass on to future generations?

## Quiz Answers

1. Stottie.
2. Split yellow peas.
3. Craster.
4. Tea.
5. Rhubarb.
6. Pease pudding.
7. A packed lunch.
8. Many answers are correct, including Hexham, Alnwick, Durham, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland and Stockton.

9–10. Every answer is personal.

## Activity Together

**Our North East Recipe Book**

Invite everyone to share the name of a favourite family recipe.

Write each one on a large sheet of paper. If someone remembers a special ingredient or cooking tip, add that too. By the end of the session, you will have created your own "North East Recipe Collection" celebrating the knowledge and memories of everyone taking part. No cooking is required, just conversation, laughter and shared memories.

## Reflection

- Food tells the story of a community.
- It reminds us of the people who cared for us, the celebrations we shared, the difficult times we came through together and the everyday moments that became treasured memories.
- Whether it was a warm stottie from the bakery, fish and chips by the sea, soup after a winter walk or a favourite pudding made by a loved one, these simple meals continue to bring comfort and connection.
- Every family recipe is part of the rich heritage of the North East.
- Every memory shared adds another ingredient to that story.

# Chapter Eight

## Market Days, High Streets and Shopping

***"Do You Fancy a Trip into Town?"***

"The shops may have changed, but the memories of market day live on."

For many people across the North East, a trip into town was something to look forward to. Whether it was Newcastle, Durham, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Hexham, Alnwick, Morpeth, Stockton, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Hartlepool or a local village market, shopping was often a social occasion as much as an everyday task.

People met neighbours, called in for a cup of tea, chatted to familiar shopkeepers and enjoyed seeing what was new in the shop windows.
Long before online shopping, people valued friendly service. Shopkeepers often knew customers by name and remembered what they usually bought.
Some shops even delivered groceries to people's homes.

### Market Day

Market days brought towns to life.
Stalls filled with fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers, clothing, household goods and local produce lined the streets.
You might hear traders calling out today's bargains, smell fresh bread from the bakery or see buckets of colourful flowers waiting to be taken home.
Many people remember carrying a shopping basket rather than plastic bags.

Children often hoped there might be enough money left for a small treat.

### The Co-op

The Co-operative Society played an important role in communities throughout the North East.

Families collected Dividend ("Divi") stamps, bought groceries, clothing and household goods, and often knew the staff personally.
For many households, careful budgeting was a way of life, and every penny mattered.

### Department Stores

A visit to a large department store felt exciting.

People remember beautifully decorated Christmas windows, polished wooden counters, helpful assistants and lifts operated by attendants.

Some families travelled into Newcastle to visit Bainbridge's, widely recognised as one of the world's earliest department stores, or Fenwick for a special purchase or to admire the famous Christmas window display.

In Sunderland, Middlesbrough and other towns, local department stores became part of family traditions too.

Trying on a new coat, choosing school shoes or buying a wedding outfit often became lasting memories.

### The Local Baker

Few smells are as welcoming as freshly baked bread.

Across the North East, local bakeries sold warm stotties, bread rolls, cakes and pies from the early hours of the morning.
People often remember calling in on the way home from school or work.
Sometimes the baker would slip an extra biscuit into the bag for a child.

Those small acts of kindness are often remembered long after the shopping itself.

### The Butcher, Greengrocer and Fishmonger

Before supermarkets became common, many families visited several different shops.

Fresh vegetables came from the greengrocer.
Meat came from the butcher.
Fish came from the fishmonger.
Each shopkeeper was a familiar face, and conversations were part of everyday life.

### Shopping for Christmas

Christmas shopping was an event in itself.

Town centres sparkled with festive lights.
Choirs sang carols.
Children eagerly searched for Father Christmas.
Families carefully chose presents, often saving throughout the year to make Christmas special.
Many people remember wrapping gifts in colourful paper and hiding them where curious children would not find them.

# Chapter Eight

## North East Voices

Here are a few more words you may have heard growing up:

Netty – An outside toilet.
Bairn – A child.
Cushat – A wood pigeon.
Hoy – To throw.
Marras – Friends, workmates or companions.

**Ask the group:**

- Which local words do you still use?
- Were there sayings that only people from your village or town understood?
- Have you taught any of these words to children or grandchildren?

Different parts of the North East have their own distinctive accents and expressions. Enjoy comparing them.

## Let's Talk Together

- Invite conversation gently.
- Which town did you visit most often?
- What was your favourite shop?
- Did you enjoy market day?
- Who usually did the family shopping?
- Did you help carry the bags?
- Do you remember collecting Divi stamps?
- Which shop always smelled wonderful?
- What did you buy with your first wages?
- Which Christmas shopping trip stands out in your memory?
- Is there a shop you still miss today?

Every answer helps tell the story of everyday life in the North East.

## Tea Break Quiz

1. What were "Divi" stamps collected from?
2. Which Newcastle department store is famous for its Christmas window?
3. What type of shop sold fresh vegetables?
4. Where would you buy fresh meat?
5. Before decimalisation, what came after shillings?
6. Name one historic North East market town.
7. What did many people carry before plastic carrier bags became common?
8. What small treat did you enjoy after shopping?
9. Which shop did you visit most often as a child?
10. Who did you enjoy shopping with?

## Did You Know?

- Bainbridge's in Newcastle, founded in 1838, is often recognised as one of the world's first purpose-built department stores.
- The historic market at Stockton-on-Tees traces its origins back to the thirteenth century and remains one of the largest outdoor markets in the North of England.
- Hexham, Alnwick, Morpeth and Barnard Castle have hosted markets for centuries, bringing together farmers, traders and local communities.
- Durham's historic Market Place has welcomed shoppers for hundreds of years and continues to be a gathering place today.
- Before decimalisation in 1971, people used pounds, shillings and pence. Many older people can still remember prices in "old money."

## Quiz Answers

1. The Co-op.
2. Fenwick.
3. The greengrocer.
4. The butcher.
5. Pence.
6. Many answers are correct, including Hexham, Morpeth, Alnwick, Durham, Stockton, Barnard Castle and Bishop Auckland.
7. A shopping basket or string bag.

8–10. Every answer is personal and equally valuable.

# Chapter Eight

## Activity Together

### Our North East High Street

Draw a simple high street on a large sheet of paper.

Invite everyone to help fill it with the shops they remember.

**Suggestions might include:**

- The baker
- The butcher
- The greengrocer
- The fish and chip shop
- The sweet shop
- The Co-op
- The post office
- The chemist
- The newsagent
- The wool shop
- The shoe shop
- The café

**As each shop is added, ask:**

- Who worked there?
- What did it smell like?
- What did you always buy?
- Who did you meet there?

By the end of the session, the group will have created a high street made from shared memories.




### Reflection

- A familiar shop can hold a lifetime of memories.
- The bell above the door.
- The friendly greeting from the shopkeeper.
- The smell of warm bread.
- The excitement of choosing sweets with a few carefully counted coins.
- These everyday moments helped shape the communities of the North East.
- They remind us that even the simplest journeys, to the market, the baker or the corner shop, could become treasured memories shared with family, friends and neighbours.
- Sometimes, the smallest moments are the ones that stay with us the longest.

# Chapter Nine

## Music, Dancing and Entertainment

***"Howay, Let's Have a Sing Song!"***

**"A familiar tune can open the door to memories that words sometimes cannot reach."**

Across the North East, music has always brought people together.
Whether it was a brass band playing in the park, a choir singing in church, neighbours gathering around the piano, dancing on a Saturday night or listening to the wireless at home, music formed the soundtrack to everyday life.

For many older people, hearing a favourite tune can bring back memories of family celebrations, weddings, dances, holidays and friendships. Some people may remember every word of a song they learned as children, even if they find everyday conversations more difficult.

There is no pressure to sing. Some people may prefer to listen quietly, tap their foot or simply smile as the music plays.

## Saturday Night Dancing

For many young people, Saturday evening meant getting dressed up and heading to the local dance hall. Across the North East, towns and cities had popular venues where couples danced to live bands and orchestras. Some people met lifelong friends, or even future husbands and wives, on the dance floor.

**Favourite dances included:**

- The Waltz
- The Foxtrot
- The Quickstep
- The Jive
- The Barn Dance

Many people remember carefully polishing their shoes before going out and hoping their favourite tune would be played.



## The Working Men's Club

Working men's clubs were an important part of community life in many North East towns and villages. They hosted concerts, bingo, talent nights, brass bands, comedians, singers and family celebrations.For many people, clubs were places where generations came together to enjoy music, laughter and friendship.

## The Sounds of the North East

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine some of the sounds that have shaped life in our region.

- Seagulls calling over the coast.
- Brass bands rehearsing before a gala.
- Church bells on a Sunday morning.
- Steam trains passing through the countryside.
- The cry of market traders.
- Children playing in the street.
- Football supporters singing together.
- The sound of waves along the beaches at Bamburgh, Redcar or Seaburn.
- Every sound has the potential to unlock a memory.

# Chapter Nine

## Theatres and Variety Shows

The North East has a proud tradition of live entertainment. Many people remember visits to theatres such as the Theatre Royal in Newcastle, the Sunderland Empire or local halls where amateur dramatic groups, choirs and visiting performers entertained packed audiences.

Pantomimes became a Christmas tradition for countless families. Children laughed, adults joined in and everyone shouted:
***"He's behind you!"***

## Going to the Pictures

Long before streaming services, going to the cinema was a real treat.

Many towns had their own picture house. People remember buying a ticket, finding a seat before the lights dimmed and watching newsreels before the main film began. An ice cream during the interval was a special luxury for many families.

**Favourite stars might have included:**

- Norman Wisdom
- Margaret Lockwood
- John Mills
- Vera Lynn

## North East Voices in Music

The North East has a rich tradition of folk music. Many families enjoyed songs celebrating local life, rivers, mining communities and the region's unique character.

Traditional instruments included the famous Northumbrian smallpipes, fiddles, concertinas and accordions. Community choirs, church choirs and brass bands continue to keep this musical heritage alive.

## Let's Talk Together

Invite conversation gently.

- Did you enjoy singing?
- Did your family sing at home?
- Who had the best singing voice?
- Did you play a musical instrument?
- Did you belong to a choir?
- Where did you go dancing?
- What was "your song"?
- Which local theatre do you remember?
- Did you enjoy the cinema?
- Which piece of music always makes you smile?

There are no right or wrong answers.

## Music Corner

**Songs in the Public Domain**

- These traditional songs may be sung together.
- "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean"
- "She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain"
- "Oh! Susanna"
- "Early One Morning"
- "Greensleeves"
- "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes"
- "Home! Sweet Home!"
- "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow"
- "Auld Lang Syne" (especially for New Year gatherings)

You may also choose to play recordings of favourite North East performers, provided you have the appropriate licence for public performance where required.

## Did You Know?

- The Northumbrian smallpipes are unique to this region and have a softer, sweeter sound than many other types of bagpipes.
- Brass bands remain an important part of community celebrations throughout the North East.
- Community singing has long been recognised as a way of bringing people together and supporting wellbeing.
- Many theatres in the North East have welcomed audiences for well over a century.
- Folk songs often tell stories about ordinary people, local places and everyday life.

# Chapter Nine

## Jack Armstrong

Jack Armstrong (1904–1978) was one of the most influential performers of the Northumbrian smallpipes and is widely remembered as the Duke of Northumberland's official piper during the mid-20th century.

His work helped preserve and popularise one of England's most distinctive musical traditions.

Armstrong was born in Wideopen, just north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Although he came from a musical family, he did not begin playing the smallpipes seriously until his twenties, when he was living in Yorkshire. He developed a distinctive style that contrasted with the more flamboyant playing of contemporaries such as Billy Pigg.

Armstrong preferred:

- expressive slow airs,
- simple traditional dance tunes,
- a warm, rich pipe tone, and
- careful, measured ornamentation.

The office of Duke's Piper dates back to at least the mid-18th century and is one of Britain's oldest continuous musical appointments.

Jack Armstrong was appointed Piper to the Duke of Northumberland in 1949 (some older sources mention 1948 because of the transition period). By his time the role had become honorary rather than a full-time estate position.

His principal official duty and was to lead the traditional music at the famous Shrove Tuesday football match in Alnwick, while also representing the Duke at ceremonial occasions. He held the appointment until 1971, when he was succeeded by Tom Matthews.
Armstrong's influence extended far beyond ceremonial duties.

He:

- made numerous BBC radio and television appearances,
- recorded extensively during the 1950s and 1960s,
- led the country dance band The Barnstormers,
- taught many younger pipers, and
- became a respected maker of Northumbrian smallpipes, helping revive the craft when few makers remained.

Among those influenced by him was Tom Matthews, who later inherited the Duke's Piper appointment. Armstrong also passed on pipe-making skills to later craftsmen, ensuring the tradition continued.

Although best known as a performer, Armstrong composed several tunes that remain in the Northumbrian repertoire, including:

- Bracken Rigg
- Rothbury Hills
- Coquet Light
- Kyloe Woods
- Northumbria Rejoices
- Powburn Lads

## Legacy

By the time of his death in 1978, Jack Armstrong had become arguably the best-known Northumbrian piper of his generation. He bridged the gap between traditional rural musicians and modern audiences through recordings, broadcasting, teaching, and instrument making. Many people credit him with ensuring that the Northumbrian smallpipes survived and flourished during the twentieth century.

One interesting historical detail is that Armstrong wore the traditional Northumberland plaid as part of his official dress as the Duke's Piper, a style that became iconic and is still associated with Northumbrian pipers today.

## Reminiscence Questions

- Have you ever enjoyed listening to traditional or folk music? What do you like about it?
- Did music play a part in family gatherings, celebrations, or community events when you were younger?
- Have you ever known someone who played a musical instrument or liked to sing?
- Jack Armstrong wore special traditional clothing for ceremonies. Do you wear special clothes for any occasions?
- Is there a song or piece of music that always brings back happy memories for you?

***I must say I am extremely impressed by the depth and width of the information NAPA has produced on the North East. It brought back a myriad of my own memories of living here. Jack Armstrong - Cullercoats***

# Chapter Nine

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which traditional instrument is closely associated with Northumberland?
2. What usually happened before the main film at the cinema many years ago?
3. Name one traditional dance.
4. What might people enjoy during the cinema interval?
5. Which Newcastle theatre has entertained audiences since the nineteenth century?
6. What event often included brass bands marching through Durham?
7. Can you name a favourite singer from your younger years?
8. Did you ever learn to play an instrument?
9. What song always gets your foot tapping?
10. Who would you most like to dance with again?

## Quiz Answers

1. Northumbrian smallpipes.
2. Newsreels (and often cartoons).
3. Any of the dances listed earlier.
4. Ice cream or refreshments.
5. Theatre Royal.
6. The Durham Miners' Gala.

7–10. Every answer is personal.

## Activity Together

**Create a North East Playlist**

Invite everyone to suggest songs that remind them of happy times.

**Some choices might be linked to:**

- Weddings
- Family parties
- Church services
- Dance halls
- School days
- Holidays
- Football matches
- Favourite singers
- Brass bands
- Seaside trips

Write every suggestion onto a large sheet of paper. If recordings are available, play one or two favourites and encourage people to clap, tap along, hum or simply listen. Remember that participation looks different for everyone.

A smile, a gentle movement of the hand or quietly mouthing the words are all meaningful ways of taking part.

## Reflection

- Music has a remarkable way of bringing people together. A familiar melody can remind us of someone we loved, a celebration we enjoyed, a place we visited or a moment that changed our lives.

- Across the North East, music has echoed through village halls, churches, football grounds, theatres, dance halls and family kitchens.

- Those songs continue to tell the story of our communities. Sometimes the most meaningful conversation begins not with a question, but with the first few notes of a familiar tune.



# Chapter Ten

## Places to Treasure

**Landmarks, Landscapes and Local Pride**

***"Every place has a story. Every place means something to someone."***

The North East is a region of remarkable contrasts.

Within a short journey, you can travel from sweeping sandy beaches to rolling hills, ancient castles to vibrant cities, peaceful market towns to dramatic moorland. For generations, these places have shaped people's lives.

They are where families have walked, worked, celebrated, worshipped and made memories. Some landmarks are recognised around the world. Others may only be known to local people, but they are no less important.

## Hadrian's Wall

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Roman soldiers built Hadrian's Wall across the north of England. Today, stretches of the wall still stand proudly across the Northumberland countryside, reminding us that people have lived, travelled and worked in this landscape for thousands of years. Many families remember school trips to the Wall, climbing grassy banks or imagining what life might have been like for the Roman soldiers stationed there.

For many people in the North East, Hadrian's Wall is a symbol of the region's history, identity and pride. Many local people also remember the much-loved Sycamore Gap tree, which stood beside the Wall for generations before it was sadly lost in 2023. Some people may wish to share memories of visiting the area, while others may find the loss upsetting. Invite conversations to develop naturally and follow the wishes of the people taking part.



# Chapter Ten

## Durham – A City of History

The city of Durham is one of the North East's greatest treasures.
Its magnificent cathedral and castle stand high above the River Wear and have welcomed visitors for centuries. Many people remember walking across Framwell gate Bridge, visiting the market, attending services in the cathedral or enjoying a picnic beside the river. Students, shoppers, families and visitors have all helped shape the city's unique atmosphere.

## Bamburgh Castle

Standing proudly above the Northumberland coast, Bamburgh Castle has watched over the sea for hundreds of years. Children often imagined it was home to kings, queens and knights. For many families, a visit to Bamburgh meant picnics on the beach, paddling in the sea and searching for shells beneath the castle walls.

## Holy Island (Lindisfarne)

Holy Island is unlike anywhere else. Connected to the mainland by a causeway that is covered by the tide twice each day, it has welcomed pilgrims, visitors and holidaymakers for generations. Many people remember carefully checking the tide times before crossing. The peaceful atmosphere, historic priory and beautiful coastline make Holy Island a place that many people return to again and again.

## The Angel of the North

Although much newer than many landmarks in the region, the Angel of the North has quickly become a symbol of welcome, hope and pride. Standing with its wings outstretched above Gateshead, it greets thousands of travellers every day. People often have strong memories of the first time they saw it.

## Beamish

Beamish allows visitors to step back in time. Walking through its streets can remind people of shops, trams, classrooms and homes from years gone by. Many visitors say it feels as though memories come alive there. Even if someone has never visited, photographs often prompt conversations about everyday life in years gone by.







## Penshaw Monument

High on Penshaw Hill stands one of the North East's most recognisable landmarks.Families have climbed the hill for generations to enjoy the view across Wearside. Many people remember flying kites, picnics, Easter walks or simply enjoying fresh air with family and friends.

## Kielder

The forests and waters of Kielder offer a very different picture of the North East. People remember peaceful walks, bird watching, fishing or simply enjoying the quiet beauty of nature. The changing seasons make every visit different.

# Chapter Ten

## North East Heritage Spotlight

**Grace Darling**

One of the North East's best-loved heroines is Grace Darling. In 1838, Grace and her father helped rescue survivors from the wreck of the Forfarshire during a fierce storm near the Farne Islands.

Her courage became famous across Britain, and her story continues to inspire people today.

**Ask the group:**

- Have you heard the story of Grace Darling?
- Who do you think has shown kindness or bravery in your own community?
- Can you remember someone who helped others without expecting anything in return?

## Let's Talk Together

Encourage conversation using open questions.

- Which place in the North East means the most to you?
- Where did your family enjoy visiting?
- Did you have a favourite picnic spot?
- Which local park did you visit as a child?
- Have you climbed Penshaw Monument?
- Do you remember visiting Beamish?
- Have you ever crossed to Holy Island?
- Which castle have you visited?
- Is there somewhere you would love to visit again?
- Which place makes you feel most at home?

**Every answer is important because every person's North East is different.**

## Did You Know?

- There are more castles in Northumberland than in any other English county.
- Durham Cathedral has stood for almost 1,000 years and is recognised as part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Holy Island can only be crossed safely when the tide is out. Tide times should always be checked before travelling.
- Kielder Water is the largest man-made lake in England by capacity.
- The Angel of the North is taller than four double-decker buses stacked on top of one another.

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which Roman landmark stretches across Northumberland?
2. Which city is famous for its cathedral and castle?
3. What must you check before driving to Holy Island?
4. Which famous sculpture stands in Gateshead?
5. Which open-air museum brings the past to life?
6. Which hill is crowned by Penshaw Monument?
7. Which county has more castles than any other in England?
8. Can you name a favourite North East landmark?
9. Which place would you most like to visit again?
10. What place always makes you smile when you think about it?

## Quiz Answers

1. Hadrian's Wall.
2. Durham.
3. The tide times.
4. The Angel of the North.
5. Beamish.
6. Penshaw Hill.
7. Northumberland.

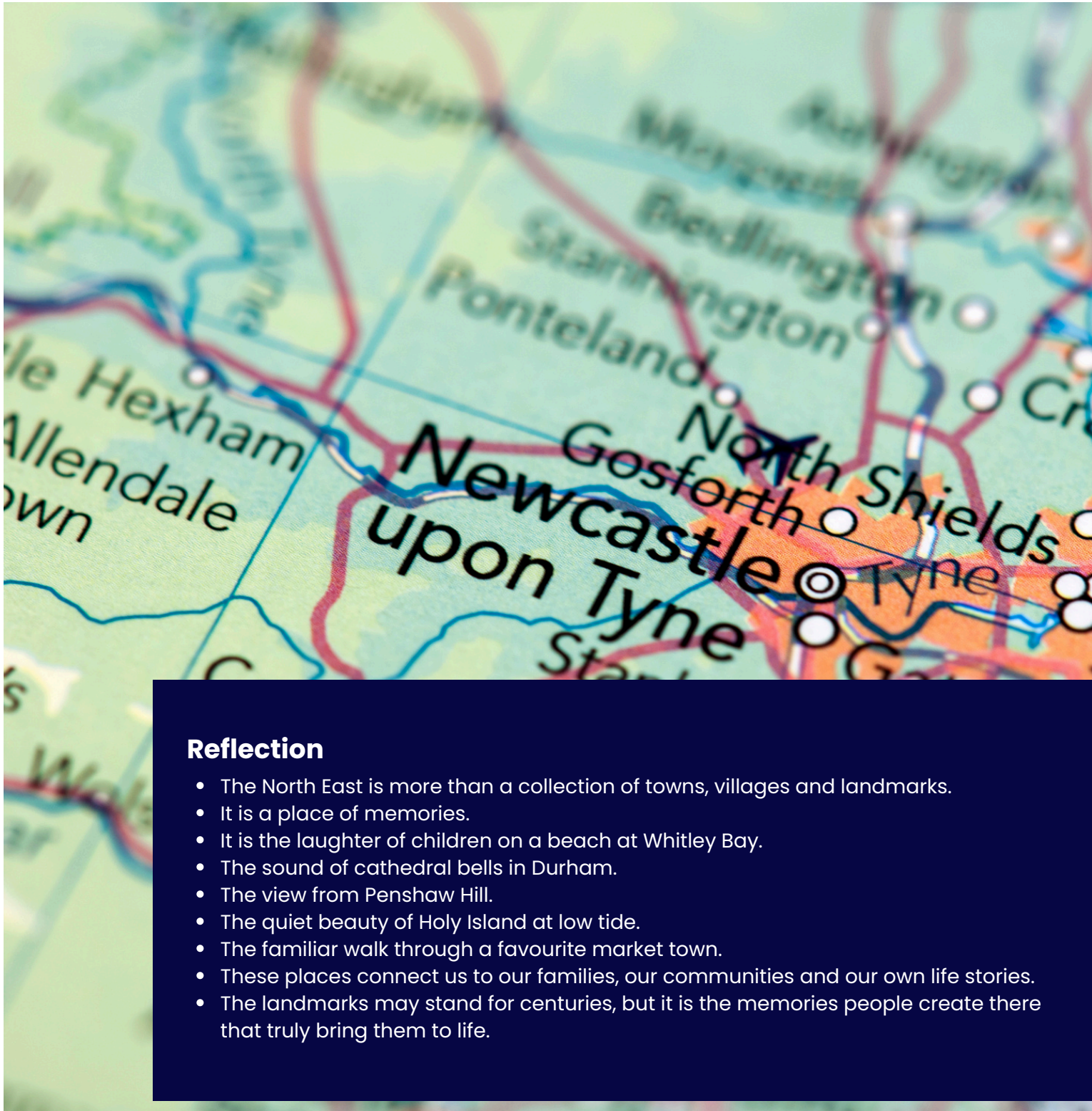
8–10. Every answer is personal and equally valuable.

# Chapter Ten

## Activity Together

**Our North East Memory Map**

- Display a large outline map of the North East.
- Invite everyone to add a coloured sticker, drawing or handwritten note showing a place that is special to them.
- Encourage people to share why they chose that place.
- Perhaps it is where they grew up.
- Where they met their husband, wife or partner.
- Where they worked.
- Where they enjoyed family holidays.
- Where they felt peaceful.
- By the end of the session, the map becomes a celebration of the places that matter most, not because they are famous, but because they are part of people's lives.




### Reflection

- The North East is more than a collection of towns, villages and landmarks.
- It is a place of memories.
- It is the laughter of children on a beach at Whitley Bay.
- The sound of cathedral bells in Durham.
- The view from Penshaw Hill.
- The quiet beauty of Holy Island at low tide.
- The familiar walk through a favourite market town.
- These places connect us to our families, our communities and our own life stories.
- The landmarks may stand for centuries, but it is the memories people create there that truly bring them to life.

# Chapter Eleven

## North East People Who Changed the World

### Inventors, Pioneers and Everyday Heroes

***"The North East has never been short of people with big ideas, kind hearts and a determination to make life better."***

Every community has its heroes. Some became famous around the world. Others quietly made a difference to their families, neighbours and friends. Together, they tell the story of a region built on innovation, compassion, courage and hard work.

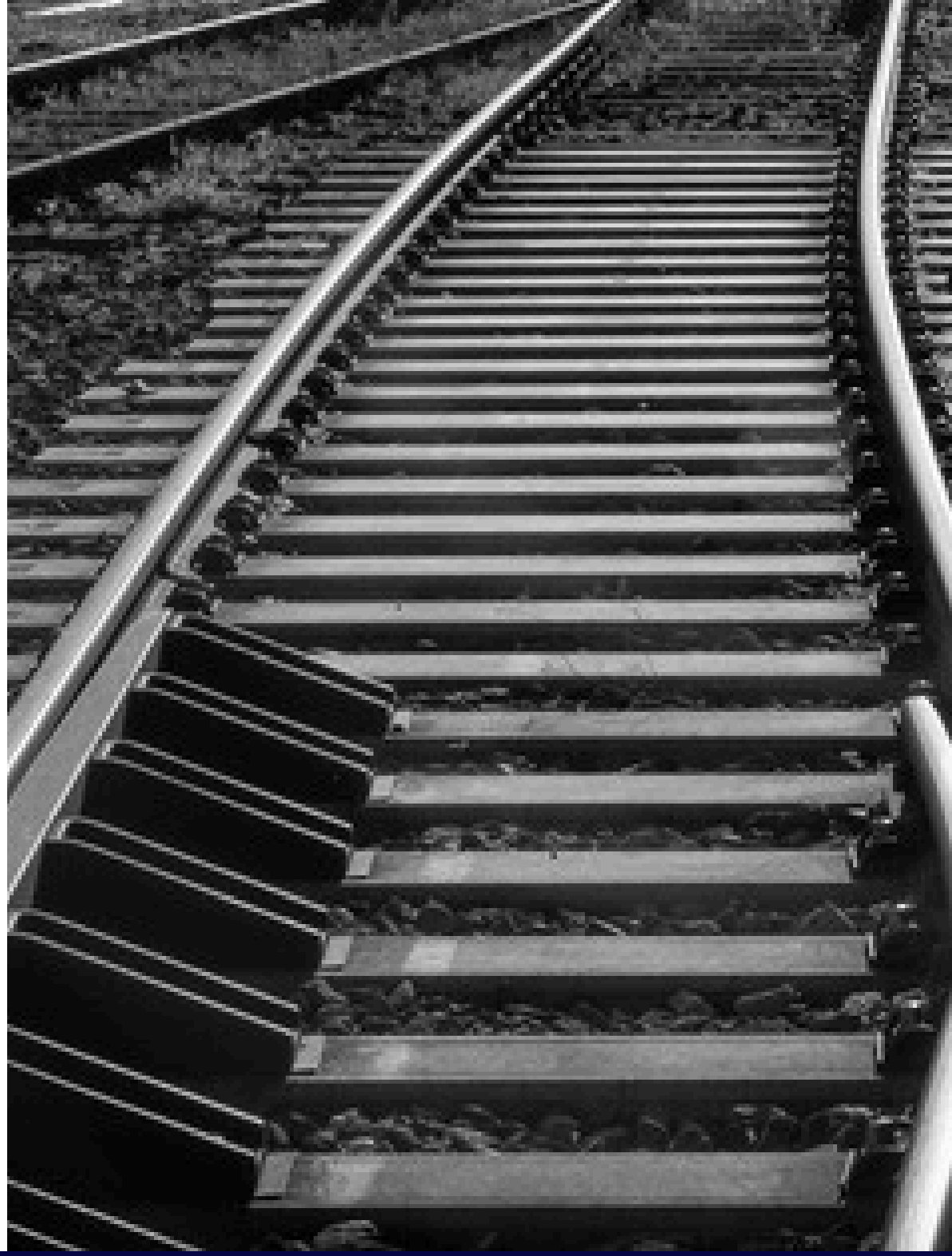
Across the North East, inventors, engineers, scientists, artists, healthcare workers, teachers, volunteers and countless others have helped shape the world we know today

## George Stephenson – The Father of the Railways

George Stephenson was born in Northumberland in 1781. Growing up in a working family, he had little formal education as a child but was determined to learn. As an adult he paid for evening lessons so he could improve his reading, writing and mathematics.George became one of the world's greatest railway engineers.

His work helped transform travel, trade and industry, making journeys quicker and connecting communities across Britain.

Many older people remember travelling by steam train for holidays, work or family visits. The rhythm of the wheels, the whistle of the engine and the smell of steam remain vivid memories for many.



# Chapter Eleven

## Joseph Swan – Lighting the Way

Joseph Swan, who lived and worked in Newcastle, developed one of the first practical electric light bulbs.His work helped change homes, workplaces, hospitals and streets across the world.

Imagine life before electric lighting.
Many families relied on candles, paraffin lamps or gas lights.
The arrival of electricity transformed everyday life.

**Ask the group:**

- Do you remember when your home had its first electrical appliances?
- Which modern invention has changed life the most?

## William Armstrong – Engineering for the Future

William Armstrong was one of the North East's greatest engineers.

He developed hydraulic machinery that improved docks, bridges and factories around the world. Today, his legacy can still be seen at Cragside, the remarkable house that became the first in the world to be lit using hydroelectric power. Visitors are often fascinated by the ingenuity and imagination shown there.

## Thomas Hepburn – Speaking Up for Others

Thomas Hepburn was born near Newcastle and became an important advocate for coal miners. He believed working people deserved safer conditions and fair treatment.

His work reminds us that caring for one another and standing together have long been part of North East communities.

## Catherine Cookson

Catherine Cookson became one of Britain's most widely read novelists.

Many of her stories were inspired by life in the North East, describing ordinary families, determination and overcoming hardship. Her books continue to be enjoyed by readers across the world.

## Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives

Not everyone appears in history books. Many of the greatest contributions are made quietly. Think about:

- The nurse who comforted frightened patients.
- The bus driver who always greeted passengers warmly.
- The school cook who remembered every child's favourite pudding.
- The volunteer who organised community events.
- The grandparent who cared for generations of children.
- The neighbour who always checked that everyone was safe during winter.

These people may never become famous, but they helped build strong communities.

## Let's Talk Together

- Invite conversation gently.
- Who inspired you when you were growing up?
- Did someone teach you a skill that you still use today?
- Who encouraged you during your working life?
- Is there someone in your family whose story should be remembered?
- What achievement are you most proud of?
- Who made your community a better place?
- If someone wrote a book about your life, what chapter would you hope they included?
- Every contribution is important.

# Chapter Eleven

## Did You Know?

- The world's first public railway to use steam locomotives operated in the North East.
- Cragside was the first house in the world powered by hydroelectricity.
- North East inventors helped improve railways, engineering, electricity and communications.
- The region has produced internationally recognised writers, musicians, scientists, sporting champions and artists.
- Many local museums continue to preserve these remarkable stories for future generations.

## North East Voices

One of the region's greatest strengths has always been community.
Many people describe the North East using words such as:

- Friendly
- Welcoming
- Hard-working
- Honest
- Resilient
- Caring
- Proud

**Ask the group:**
"What words would you use to describe the North East?"
Create a shared list together.

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which North East engineer is known as the "Father of the Railways"?
2. Who helped develop one of the first practical electric light bulbs?
3. Which remarkable house was the first to use hydroelectric power?
4. Who became famous for rescuing shipwreck survivors near the Farne Islands?
5. Which author wrote many novels inspired by life in the North East?
6. What invention made travelling across Britain much easier during the nineteenth century?
7. Who inspired you most in your own life?
8. What skill are you most proud of learning?
9. Which local person deserves to be remembered?
10. What would you most like younger generations to know about growing up in the North East?

## Reflection

- **History is often told through famous names.**
- **But the true history of the North East lives in ordinary people.**
- **It lives in families who supported one another.**
- **In neighbours who shared what little they had.**
- **In skilled workers who took pride in their craft.**
- **In carers, teachers, shopkeepers, engineers, fishermen, farmers, miners, nurses, volunteers and countless others who quietly made life better for those around them.**
- **Every person has helped shape the North East.**
- **Every life has left its mark.**
- **And every story deserves to be remembered.**

## Quiz Answers

1. George Stephenson.
2. Joseph Swan.
3. Cragside.
4. Grace Darling.
5. Catherine Cookson.
6. The railway.

7–10. Every answer is unique and equally valuable.

## Activity Together

**Celebrating Local Heroes**
Provide each participant with a simple card headed:

- "Someone I Will Always Remember..."
- Invite people to write, draw or dictate the name of someone who made a difference in their life.
- It might be:
- A parent or grandparent
- A favourite teacher
- A neighbour
- A friend
- A work colleague
- A nurse or doctor
- A community volunteer
- A sports coach
- A local shopkeeper

If people are happy to do so, invite them to share why they chose that person. This activity often leads to warm conversations and helps celebrate the many everyday heroes whose kindness shaped North East communities.

# Chapter Twelve

## Through the Seasons

**Traditions, Celebrations and the Changing Year in the North East**

**"Every season brings its own memories. Sometimes the time of year is all it takes to start a conversation."**

Across the North East, the changing seasons have always shaped everyday life.Long before central heating, supermarkets and modern transport, people paid close attention to the weather. Farmers watched the skies, fishermen kept an eye on the sea, miners walked to work through snow and rain, and families planned celebrations around the seasons.

Children noticed the first daffodils in spring, blackberries in late summer, colourful leaves in autumn and the excitement of the first snowfall. Many traditions were shared across the region, while others belonged to individual families or villages.



Durham Cathedral and River Wear in Spring in Durham, England

### Spring

For many people, spring brought a sense of hope. Gardens began to bloom, birds returned to nest and the countryside slowly turned green again. Children often spent more time outdoors after the long winter.

Many families enjoyed:

- Planting vegetables.
- Spring cleaning.
- Easter celebrations.
- Walks in local parks.
- Visiting lambs on nearby farms.
- Looking for primroses, bluebells and daffodils.

Across Northumberland and County Durham, woodland paths became carpeted with bluebells. People often remember Sunday walks followed by tea and cake at home.

# Chapter Twelve

## Summer

Summer often meant longer evenings and more time together. Children played outside until dusk. Families packed picnics and headed to the coast. Cricket matches were played on village greens.

Agricultural shows brought farming communities together.Many people remember haymaking in the countryside or helping relatives on farms during school holidays.

**Favourite summer outings included:**

- Bamburgh Beach
- Whitley Bay
- South Shields
- Redcar
- Saltburn
- Craster
- Seaburn
- Roker
- Kielder
- Derwent Reservoir

Some families travelled only a few miles. Others simply spread a blanket in the local park. What mattered most was being together.

## Autumn

Autumn was the season of harvest. Schools, churches and chapels often held Harvest Festival services. Children proudly carried baskets filled with fruit, vegetables or tins of food to decorate the church.

Many people remember singing harvest hymns and helping distribute food to older neighbours or local families.

**Gardens provided:**

- Apples
- Pears
- Rhubarb
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Onions
- Runner beans

Blackberry picking was another favourite activity. Many people remember returning home with stained fingers and enough fruit for pies and jam.

## Let's Talk Together

- Did you celebrate Harvest Festival?
- Did anyone in your family keep an allotment?
- What fruit did you enjoy picking?
- Did you help make jam or chutney?



South Shields Beach

# Chapter Twelve

## Winter

Winter could be challenging.
Snow sometimes covered the hills and villages for days.

Coal fires became the heart of the home. Neighbours checked on one another, particularly older residents.

Children pulled sledges through the snow, built snowmen and eagerly waited to see whether school would close.

**Simple pleasures included:**

- Toast by the fire.
- Homemade soup.
- Knitting.
- Board games.
- Listening to the wireless.
- Family evenings together.

For many people, winter was also the season when communities came together most strongly.



Whitley Bay

## Christmas in the North East

Christmas has always been one of the most treasured times of year.

Families decorated their homes, attended carol services, wrapped presents and prepared special meals. Many children eagerly awaited Father Christmas, while adults worked hard to create a happy celebration, whatever their circumstances.

**Traditional memories include:**

- Decorating a real Christmas tree.
- Hanging paper chains.
- Homemade decorations.
- Carol singing.
- Christmas crackers.
- Board games after lunch.
- The Queen's Christmas Broadcast.
- Visiting relatives.
- Mince pies.
- Christmas cake.
- Trifle.

Some communities organised Christmas concerts, nativity plays or festive brass band performances.

## Remembrance

Across the North East, Remembrance Sunday continues to be observed with dignity and respect. Communities gather at war memorials to remember those who served and those who never returned home.Many families have personal stories connected with military service.

Some people may wish to share these memories, while others may prefer simply to reflect quietly.Always follow the person's lead and avoid placing pressure on anyone to talk about experiences they find difficult.



# Chapter Twelve

## Local Traditions

The North East has many traditions that continue today.

**These include:**

- The Durham Miners' Gala.
- Agricultural shows at places such as Hexham, Alnwick and Weardale.
- Village fêtes.
- Brass band concerts.
- Church coffee mornings.
- Community flower shows.
- Local fairs.
- Christmas markets.
- Bonfire Night celebrations.

Many people remember helping organise these events or attending with family and friends.




**Parade of Durham Miners Association**

## Did You Know?

- Northumberland is home to some of the darkest skies in Europe, making it an excellent place for stargazing.
- The North Pennines are designated as a National Landscape and UNESCO Global Geopark because of their special natural beauty and geology.
- Red squirrels still live in parts of Northumberland and Kielder, although they are much less common than grey squirrels.
- Puffins return to the Farne Islands each spring to breed.
- The Durham Miners' Gala has been held since 1871 and remains one of the world's largest celebrations of mining heritage.

## North East Nature Watch

**Invite everyone to think about the wildlife they remember.**

**Have you seen:**

- **Puffins?**
- **Curlews?**
- **Robins?**
- **Red squirrels?**
- **Hedgehogs?**
- **Barn owls?**
- **Grey seals?**
- **Swans on the River Wear or River Tyne?**

**Ask:**
**"What wildlife do you remember seeing as a child that seems less common today?"**

# Chapter Twelve

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which flowers are often seen covering Northumberland woodlands in spring?
2. Which colourful bird nests on the Farne Islands?
3. What celebration thanks people for the harvest?
4. Which season is associated with blackberry picking?
5. What kept many homes warm during winter?
6. Which annual event celebrates the heritage of mining communities in County Durham?
7. What was your favourite season as a child?
8. Which family celebration do you remember most fondly?
9. What smell reminds you of Christmas?
10. Which North East tradition would you like future generations to continue?

## Quiz Answers

1. Bluebells.
2. Puffins.
3. Harvest Festival.
4. Autumn.
5. Coal fires.
6. The Durham Miners' Gala.

7–10. Every answer is personal and equally meaningful.

## Activity Together

A Year of Memories
Draw a large circle and divide it into the four seasons.

Invite participants to fill each section with memories.

**For example:**

### Spring

- New lambs
- Daffodils
- Easter eggs
- Gardening

### Summer

- Seaside holidays
- Picnics
- Cricket
- Ice cream

### Autumn

- Harvest Festival
- Blackberry picking
- Bonfire Night
- Falling leaves

### Winter

- Christmas
- Snow
- Coal fires
- Homemade soup

Encourage everyone to add their own memories.
There is no right or wrong answer.



## Reflection

**The seasons remind us that life is always changing. Year after year, the rivers continue to flow, the tide comes in and out, the daffodils bloom, harvests are gathered and families celebrate together. For many people, these familiar rhythms provide comfort and connection. Whether someone remembers climbing Penshaw Hill on a crisp autumn day, collecting shells at Bamburgh in summer, singing carols in a village church or watching snow fall across the Durham Dales, those memories remain part of the living story of the North East.**

# Chapter Thirteen

## On the Move

Buses, Trains, Ferries and Favourite Journeys

***"It's not always the destination we remember, it's the people we travelled with and the stories we shared along the way."***

The North East has always been a region on the move. People travelled to work in the mines, shipyards, factories, farms, schools, hospitals and offices. Families travelled to visit grandparents on a Sunday, friends met in town for shopping, and children eagerly set off on school trips or seaside adventures. For many people, travelling was an experience to be enjoyed.

There was time to chat with fellow passengers, admire the view from the window and greet familiar faces along the route.

## The Local Bus

For generations, the local bus connected communities.

- Children travelled to school.
- Workers travelled to their jobs.
- Families travelled into town for market day.
- Older people met friends for shopping or afternoon tea.
- Bus conductors often became well-known faces.

Many passengers remember hearing the conductor call out the next stop, clipping tickets with a ticket machine and exchanging friendly conversation with regular travellers.

The bus was part of community life.

## The Railway

The North East has a proud railway heritage. The pioneering work of the region's engineers helped transform travel across Britain and beyond. Steam trains once carried people to work, on holiday and to visit family.

**Many people remember:**

- Steam drifting across the platform.
- The whistle before departure.
- Porters helping with luggage.
- Waiting rooms warmed by coal fires.
- Packed sandwiches wrapped in greaseproof paper.
- Excitement before a family holiday.

For many children, simply watching the trains pass was a favourite pastime.

## The Metro

Although newer than many of the memories in this resource, the Tyne and Wear Metro has become an important part of everyday life since it opened in 1980.

Many people remember travelling into Newcastle for shopping, visiting the coast at Tynemouth or Whitley Bay, or attending football matches using the Metro. Its bright yellow trains have become a familiar sight across Tyne and Wear.

## Across the Water

The Shields Ferry has carried people across the River Tyne for generations. Many families remember crossing between North Shields and South Shields before enjoying a day by the sea.

Watching the busy river traffic, spotting ships and feeling the fresh air on deck remain happy memories for many local people.

## Cycling

Long before busy roads became common, many people travelled by bicycle.

**Bicycles meant freedom.**

- Children explored local lanes.
- Teenagers cycled to dances.
- Adults rode to work carrying their lunch, or "bait", in a bag fastened to the handlebars.
- Learning to ride a bicycle was a proud achievement.

Many people can still remember who first held onto the saddle before letting go

# Chapter Thirteen

## Walking Everywhere

**Walking was simply part of everyday life.**
People walked to school.
Walked to church.
Walked to work.
Walked to the corner shop.
Walked to visit friends.
Evening walks became family traditions.

**Favourite places included:**

- Along the River Tyne.
- The Durham riverside.
- The promenade at Seaburn.
- Saltburn Pier.
- Jesmond Dene.
- Herrington Country Park (on land once associated with coal mining).
- The Quayside in Newcastle.
- Riverside paths in Stockton.

These walks created opportunities to talk, laugh and enjoy being together.

## Favourite Journeys

Ask a group of people about journeys they remember and the answers are wonderfully varied.

Some remember travelling to Blackpool for a holiday.
Others remember travelling only a few miles to spend the day with grandparents.

Some remember crowded buses after football matches.
Others remember cycling home beneath a star-filled Northumberland sky.
Every journey matters because every journey is part of someone's life story.



The promenade at Whitley Bay with St Mary's lighthouse

# Chapter Thirteen

## Let's Talk Together

Take your time and allow conversation to develop naturally.

- How did you travel to school?
- Did you ever travel by steam train?
- Which bus route do you remember?
- Did your family own a car?
- What was your first bicycle like?
- Did you enjoy walking?
- Which journey do you remember most clearly?
- Where did you go on your first holiday?
- Who did you enjoy travelling with?
- If you could take one journey again, where would you go?

There is no pressure to remember exact dates or places.
The conversation itself is what matters.

## Did You Know?

- The Stockton and Darlington Railway opening was the world's first public railway to use steam locomotives to carry passengers and goods.
- The Tyne and Wear Metro was the first modern light rail system to open in the United Kingdom.
- The Shields Ferry continues a river crossing tradition that stretches back for centuries.
- Many former railway lines across the North East have become popular walking and cycling routes.
- The region's famous bridges continue to connect communities across the Rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees.

## North East Voices

You may hear these transport-related expressions:
**Gan canny** – Take care.
**Hoy us over** – Throw it over to me.
**Bait box** – A lunch box carried to work.

**Ask the group:**

- Which expressions did you hear growing up?
- Did different villages have different sayings?

Language is part of our heritage too.

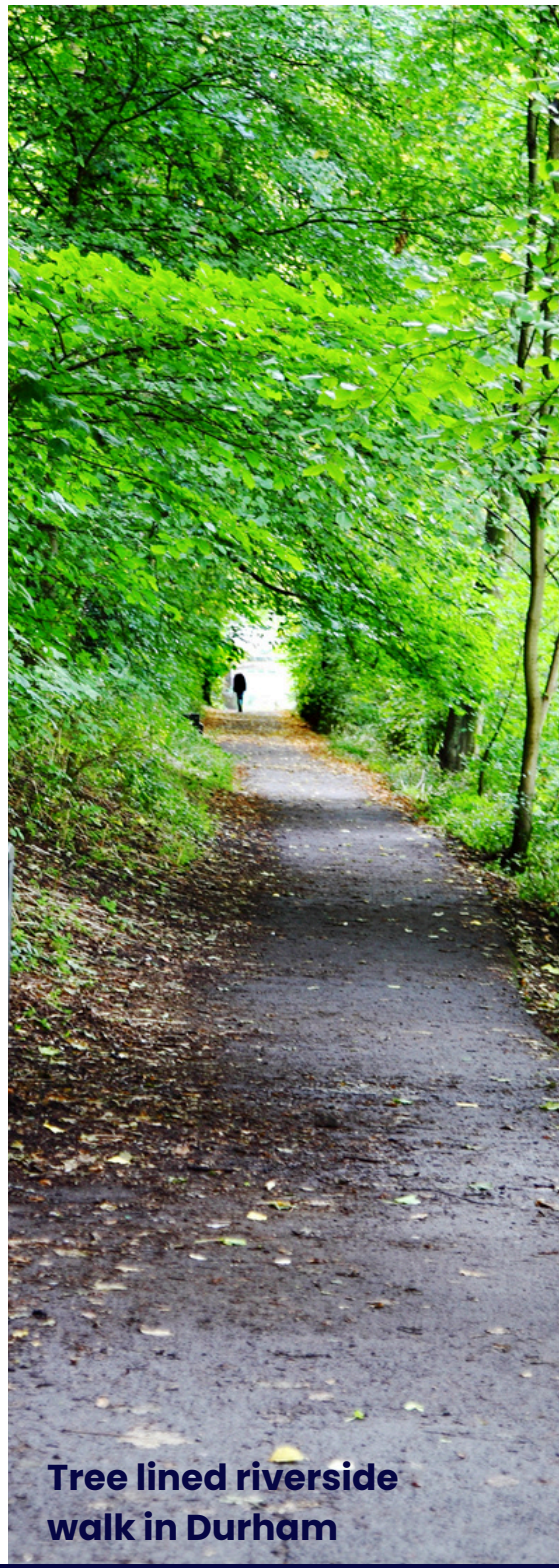
## Tea Break Quiz

1. Which famous railway opened between Stockton and Darlington in 1825?
2. What machine did a bus conductor use to issue tickets?
3. Which ferry crosses the River Tyne?
4. What is the name of the rapid transit system serving Tyne and Wear?
5. Which North East engineer helped pioneer the railway?
6. Name one place where your family enjoyed going for a walk.
7. Did your family own a bicycle?
8. Which journey do you remember most fondly?
9. What was your favourite way to travel?
10. Who would you most like to travel with again?

## Quiz Answers

1. The Stockton and Darlington Railway.
2. A ticket machine (or ticket punch).
3. The Shields Ferry.
4. The Tyne and Wear Metro.
5. George Stephenson.

6–10. Every answer is personal and equally important.



**Tree lined riverside walk in Durham**

# Chapter Thirteen

## Activity Together

**My Favourite Journey**

Provide each person with a simple outline of a road or railway track.

Invite them to complete the sentence:
***"One journey I will always remember is..."***

People may choose to write, draw or simply tell their story while someone else records it.

**Encourage discussion about:**

- Who travelled with them.
- What they could see.
- What they packed.
- How they felt.
- What made the journey memorable.

These stories often reveal much more than the destination—they tell us about family, friendship, work and community.

## Reflection

- Journeys help shape our lives.
- Some took us to school.
- Some took us to work.
- Some took us to weddings, birthdays and holidays.
- Some simply took us home.

Across the North East, buses, trains, ferries, bicycles and well-worn footpaths have connected people and communities for generations. The roads may have changed, the vehicles may be different and stations may look unfamiliar.



# Chapter Fourteen

## Sport, Games and Community Spirit

Saturdays, Supporters and Friendly Competition

***"You didn't have to play sport to be part of it. Many of the happiest memories came from cheering someone on."***

Across the North East, sport has always brought people together. Whether it was football on a muddy field, cricket on the village green, bowling with friends, rowing on the River Tyne, pigeon racing or children kicking a ball around the street, sport has long been part of everyday life.

For some people it meant pulling on a team shirt. For others it meant standing on the touchline, making the half-time tea or travelling with friends to support the local team.

## Football – A Way of Life

Football is woven into the story of the North East. Generations of families have followed their local clubs with great pride. Across the region, people have supported teams including:

- Newcastle United F.C.
- Sunderland A.F.C.
- Middlesbrough F.C.
- Hartlepool United F.C.
- Darlington F.C.
- South Shields F.C.
- Blyth Spartans A.F.C.
- Spennymoor Town F.C.

Some families supported the same club for generations. Others enjoyed local amateur football, school teams or village matches. Many people remember listening to the football results on the radio on Saturday evenings or reading the sports pages in the local newspaper. For some, football was a family tradition passed from grandparents to grandchildren.



# Chapter Fourteen

## Cricket on Summer Afternoons

Village cricket clubs have long been at the heart of many Northumberland and County Durham communities. The sound of leather on willow, the smell of freshly cut grass and the sight of families sitting in deckchairs beside the boundary remain treasured memories. Many people remember bringing homemade cakes to club events or helping prepare the pitch.

## Bowls

Bowling greens can be found in parks and communities across the North East.Bowls is enjoyed by people of all ages and offers friendship, gentle exercise and conversation. Many lifelong friendships have begun over a game of bowls.

## Rowing and the Rivers

The rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees have long been home to rowing clubs. Early morning training sessions, local regattas and community competitions continue to bring people together. Many people remember watching races from the riverbank, even if they never rowed themselves.

## Pigeon Racing

For many North East families, racing pigeons was more than a hobby. Lofts stood behind houses in towns and villages across the region. People cared for their birds with great dedication. Race days created excitement as families waited for pigeons to return home. Many participants still remember the names of their favourite birds.

## Athletics and Running

School sports days were highlights of the year. Children competed in egg-and-spoon races, sack races, relay races and long jump. Parents and grandparents cheered from the sidelines.Today, the Great North Run brings together thousands of runners and volunteers, continuing the North East tradition of supporting one another.

## Street Games

Not every game needed special equipment. Children created their own fun.

**Favourite games included:**

- Hopscotch.
- Tig.
- Skipping.
- Hide and seek.
- Marbles.
- Football.
- Conkers.
- Rounders.
- Two-ball.
- Hoops.

The streets, parks and back lanes became playgrounds full of laughter.

## Let's Talk Together

**Invite conversation gently.**

- **Which team did your family support?**
- **Did you ever play football or cricket?**
- **Were you part of a bowling club?**
- **Did anyone in your family keep racing pigeons?**
- **Which playground games did you enjoy?**
- **Do you remember school sports day?**
- **Who always encouraged you?**
- **Did you watch sport with family or friends?**
- **Which sporting memory makes you smile?**
- **Is there a local sporting hero you admire?**

**Remember that everyone can join in, whether they played sport or simply enjoyed watching.**

## Did You Know?

- **The North East has produced Olympic champions, world-class footballers, rowers, athletes and cricketers.**
- **The Great North Run, first held in 1981, has become the world's largest half marathon and is famous for its friendly atmosphere.**
- **Community football clubs across the region have helped generations of children develop confidence, teamwork and lifelong friendships.**
- **Many public parks in the North East still have bowling greens that remain popular today.**
- **Pigeon racing clubs continue to thrive in some communities, keeping an important tradition alive.**

# Chapter Fourteen

## Let's Talk Together

Take your time and allow conversation to develop naturally.

- How did you travel to school?
- Did you ever travel by steam train?
- Which bus route do you remember?
- Did your family own a car?
- What was your first bicycle like?
- Did you enjoy walking?
- Which journey do you remember most clearly?
- Where did you go on your first holiday?
- Who did you enjoy travelling with?
- If you could take one journey again, where would you go?

There is no pressure to remember exact dates or places.
The conversation itself is what matters.

## Did You Know?

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- The Tyne and Wear Metro was the first modern light rail system to open in the United Kingdom.
- The Shields Ferry continues a river crossing tradition that stretches back for centuries.
- Many former railway lines across the North East have become popular walking and cycling routes.
- The region's famous bridges continue to connect communities across the Rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees.

## North East Heritage Spotlight

**The Great North Run**

Each September, tens of thousands of people take part in the Great North Run.

Some run to achieve a personal goal.
Others run in memory of loved ones.

Many raise money for charities that support people across the region.

Just as important are the thousands of volunteers and spectators who line the route, cheering every participant from the start in Newcastle to the finish in South Shields.

The event reflects something many people associate with the North East, community spirit, encouragement and looking out for one another.

**Ask the group:**

- Have you ever watched the Great North Run?
- Have you supported someone taking part?
- How do communities come together to help one another today?



# Chapter Fourteen

## Tea Break Quiz

1. Name one professional football club from the North East.
2. Which famous annual running event finishes in South Shields?
3. Which sport is often played on a village green during summer?
4. What hobby involved caring for birds in lofts behind many homes?
5. Name one playground game you enjoyed.
6. Which rivers are closely associated with rowing in the North East?
7. What sport or game brought your family together?
8. Who first taught you to play a game?
9. Which sporting memory always makes you smile?
10. What does good sportsmanship mean to you?

## Quiz Answers

1. Many answers are correct.
2. The Great North Run.
3. Cricket.
4. Pigeon racing.
5. Many answers are correct.
6. The Tyne, Wear and Tees.

7–10. Every answer is personal and equally valuable.

## Activity Together

**Match Day Memories**

Invite participants to imagine they are getting ready for a Saturday afternoon match.

**Ask questions such as:**

- What would you wear?
- Who would you travel with?
- Would you stand or sit?
- Did you buy a programme?
- What snacks did you enjoy?
- What songs or chants do you remember?
- What happened after the match?

If the group supports different teams, celebrate the friendly rivalry.

Remind everyone that the aim is to enjoy sharing memories rather than debating results.

## Reflection

- Sport has always been about people.
- It is about teammates who encouraged us.
- Friends who travelled beside us.
- Families who stood on the sidelines.
- Neighbours who celebrated together.
- Across the North East, sport has strengthened communities, created lifelong friendships and given people moments of joy that are remembered for decades.
- Whether someone scored the winning goal, bowled the perfect end, watched proudly from the stands or simply kicked a ball around the street after school, those memories remain part of the region's story.

In the North East, supporting one another has always been one of our greatest strengths.



Northumberland Cricket Ground

# Chapter Fifteen

## A North East Conversation Collection

"Some memories may come quickly, while others may simply make us smile. Every conversation is valuable."

Sometimes a familiar word, smell, sound or object is enough to open the door to a happy memory. You do not need to answer every question. Simply choose the ones that feel meaningful. The aim is to enjoy talking together and sharing stories.

## Home and Family...

**Tell us about ...**

- ...warming your hands by a coal fire?
- ...a kettle singing on the hob?
- ...scrubbing the front doorstep?
- ...washing day with the mangle?
- ...hanging washing across the back lane?
- ...polishing shoes for school on Sunday evening?
- ...listening to the wireless before television became common?
- ...the smell of baking on a Saturday afternoon?
- ...grandparents living nearby?
- ...calling next door to borrow a cup of sugar?

## Let's Talk Together

- Who always made you feel welcome at home?
- What did your kitchen smell like?
- What was your favourite room in the house?

## Around the Town

**Tell us about...**

- ...going into Newcastle for a special shopping trip?
- ...market day in Hexham, Morpeth or Stockton?
- ...collecting your Co-op Divi?
- ...calling at the local bakery for a warm stottie?
- ...the fish and chip shop on a Friday?
- ...waiting outside the cinema?
- ...window shopping at Christmas?
- ...meeting friends in the town centre?
- ...the sound of the market traders?
- ...seeing the Christmas lights switched on?

## Let's Talk Together

- Which town did you visit most often?
- Which shop do you miss the most?
- Who did you usually go shopping with?



## School Days

**Tell us about...**

- ...writing with a fountain pen?
- ...the smell of chalk in the classroom?
- ...school milk in little bottles?
- ...playground games?
- ...walking home with friends?
- ...school concerts?
- ...sports day?
- ...your favourite teacher?
- ...school dinners and custard?
- ...the school bell at the end of the day?

## Let's Talk Together

- What did you enjoy most about school?
- Who was your best friend?
- Which lesson did you look forward to?

## Beside the Sea

**Tell us about...**

- ...building sandcastles at Whitley Bay?
- ...donkey rides at South Shields?
- ...walking along Roker or Seaburn?
- ...buying kippers in Craster?
- ...collecting shells at Bamburgh?
- ...watching boats from Seahouses?
- ...finding colourful sea glass at Seaham?
- ...an ice cream melting faster than you could eat it?
- ...fish and chips eaten straight from the paper?
- ...the cry of the seagulls overhead?

## Let's Talk Together

- Which beach always felt like "your" beach?
- Did you paddle in the sea?
- What always went into the picnic basket?

# Chapter Fifteen

## Sensory Memories

Sometimes our senses remember before our minds do.

**Tell us about the smell of:**

- Freshly baked stotties?
- Coal smoke on a frosty morning?
- Salt air at the seaside?
- New-mown hay?
- Fish and chips?
- Polish on the school floor?
- Fresh flowers in church?
- Sunday dinner cooking?
- Rain on warm pavements?
- Engine oil in a workshop?

**Can you remember the sounds of:**

- Church bells?
- Steam trains?
- Brass bands?
- Football crowds?
- Children playing outside?
- Waves on the beach?
- Seagulls?
- The market?
- A kettle boiling?
- Family laughter?

## Working Life

**Tell us about...**

- ...your first day at work?
- ...receiving your first pay packet?
- ...cycling or walking to work?
- ...taking your "bait" to work?
- ...learning from experienced workmates?
- ...the friendships you made?
- ...clocking in?
- ...the tea break conversations?
- ...wearing a uniform?
- ...feeling proud of a job well done?

## Let's Talk Together

- What job are you most proud of?
- Who taught you the most?
- What made a good workmate?

## North East Traditions

Tell us about...

- ...the Durham Miners' Gala?
- ...brass bands playing in the park?
- ...Harvest Festival at school or church?
- ...village fêtes?
- ...local carnivals?
- ...Bonfire Night celebrations?
- ...carol singing?
- ...family weddings in the church hall?
- ...Sunday afternoon walks?
- ...community concerts?

## Let's Talk Together

- Which celebration did you enjoy most?
- What brought your community together?

## North East Voices

Many local words bring back happy memories.

Do you remember hearing:

- Howay!
- Hinny
- Bairn
- Canny
- Gan yem
- Marras
- Clarty
- Bait
- Netty
- Hoy

**Ask one another:**

- Which words do you still use today?
- Did your grandparents have favourite sayings?

## Activity Together

**Pick a Memory**

- **Write each "Tell us about...?" prompt onto individual cards.**
- **Place them in a small box or basket.**
- **Invite each person to choose a card at random.**
- **Take time to explore wherever the conversation leads.**
- **Some prompts may spark a long discussion.**
- **Others may simply bring a smile.**
- **Both are equally valuable.**

## Reflection

- **Memories are like threads woven through our lives.**
- **Some are bright and colourful.**
- **Some are quiet and gentle.**
- **Some are shared by whole communities.**
- **Others belong to one person alone.**
- **In the North East, memories live in our streets, our rivers, our beaches, our villages and our families.**
- **Most of all, they live in the people who are willing to tell their stories.**

**Thank you for sharing yours.**

# Chapter Sixteen

## Can You Guess What It Is?

**Everyday Objects from North East Life**

***"Sometimes an everyday object can tell an extraordinary story."***

Many objects that were once part of daily life are now rarely seen. For older people, however, they may bring back vivid memories of home, work, family and community. When using this activity, place an object (or a photograph of it) where everyone can see it.

**Rather than asking, "What is it?", try asking:**

- "What does this remind you of?"
- "Who might have used something like this?"
- "Did you have one at home?"
- "How was it used?"
- "Who taught you how to use it?"

Remember, there is no need for people to identify every object correctly. The conversation is much more important than the answer.

### Object One – A Flat Cap

For many years, flat caps were worn by men across the North East.
People wore them to work, to football matches, to church, to market and for family celebrations. A cap often lasted for years and became part of someone's everyday appearance.

**Let's Talk Together**

- Did someone in your family wear a flat cap?
- Where did they usually wear it?
- Did anyone have a "best" cap for Sundays?

### Object Two – A Miner's Lamp

Mining lamps became symbols of North East communities. They provided light underground and helped improve safety for generations of miners. Today they remind many families of relatives who worked in the pits.

**Let's Talk Together**

- Did anyone in your family work in mining?
- What stories did they tell about work?
- How important was community where you lived?

### Object Three – A Washboard

Before washing machines became common, clothes were often washed by hand. Using a washboard took time, effort and determination.
Many people remember helping with wash day or watching parents and grandparents work together.

**Let's Talk Together**

- What jobs did everyone help with at home?
- Did children have household chores?
- Which jobs did you enjoy, or try to avoid?







# Chapter Sixteen

## Object Four – A Railway Ticket

A small ticket could represent a big adventure.

**It might have taken someone to:**




- Newcastle.
- Durham.
- Middlesbrough.
- Hartlepool.
- Whitley Bay.
- Redcar.
- Saltburn.
- Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- Alnmouth.
- Sunderland.

**Let's Talk Together**

- Which railway journey do you remember most?
- Did anyone wave from the platform?
- What did you pack for the journey?

## *Did You Know?*

***Many museums across the North East preserve everyday objects because they tell us just as much about history as famous buildings or important events. Ordinary objects remind us how people lived, worked, learned and cared for one another.***

***They help us understand the lives of ordinary families, the very people who built today's communities.***

## Object Five – A Baking Tin

- Many North East kitchens were filled with wonderful smells.
- Fresh bread.
- Stotties.
- Fruit cake.
- Parkin.
- Apple pie.
- Treacle tart.

Many recipes were never written down.
They were simply remembered and shared.

**Let's Talk Together**

- Who was the baker in your family?
- Which recipe would you like to taste again?
- Did anyone bake for neighbours?

## Object Six – A Football Programme

Football has brought generations together. Some people collected programmes for years. Others simply enjoyed reading the team news before kick-off.

**Let's Talk Together**

- Which team did you support?
- Who took you to your first match?
- What do you remember most, the game or the company?

## Object Seven – A Teapot

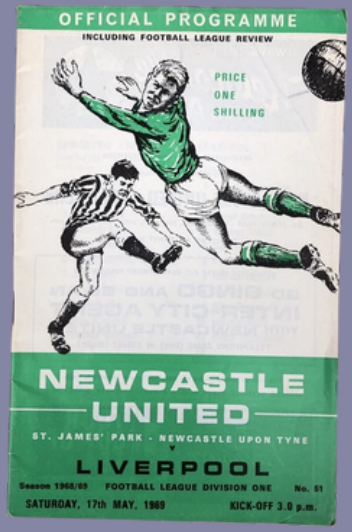
The teapot has been at the heart of North East hospitality for generations.

- Tea marked celebrations.
- Tea comforted people after difficult days.
- Tea welcomed neighbours and visitors.

**Many important conversations began with:**

- "I'll put the kettle on."
- Let's Talk Together
- Who made the best cup of tea?
- Did neighbours call in unexpectedly?








# Tea Break Quiz

NAPA

Can you match the object with its use?

Write your answer next to the description

| What was it used for? |
| --- |
| Worn outdoors |
| Washing clothes |
| Making tea |
| Travelling |
| Carrying books |
| Baking cakes or bread |
| Following a match |
| Providing light underground |

**A**



**B**



**C**



**D**




**E**




**F**



**G**



**H**



# Chapter Sixteen

## Activity Together

**Create a North East Memory Box**

Invite everyone to suggest an object that reminds them of life in the North East.

**Ideas might include:**

- A bus ticket.
- A brass band photograph.
- A postcard from Bamburgh.
- A piece of sea glass from Seaham.
- A football scarf.
- A wooden clothes peg.
- A knitting pattern.
- A library ticket.
- A postcard of Durham Cathedral.
- A shell collected from the beach.

If possible, create a real Memory Box for your care home or ward.

Encourage individuals, residents, patients, relatives and staff to contribute objects or photographs (or copies of them) over time.

The collection can become a valuable shared resource that reflects the local community.

## Reflection

- **History is not only found in castles, museums or books.**
- **It is found in a favourite teapot.**
- **A well-used cap.**
- **A worn shopping basket.**
- **A train ticket tucked safely inside a coat pocket.**
- **These everyday objects remind us that ordinary lives are extraordinary.**
- **Every object tells a story.**
- **Every story connects us with the people, places and communities that make the North East such a special place.**
- **Sometimes the smallest object holds the biggest memory.**



# Chapter Seventeen

## My North East

**Celebrating Our Stories**

***"No two lives are the same. Every person has their own journey, their own memories and their own story to tell."***

The North East is the place where many people learned to walk, made friends, found work, raised families, celebrated happy times and faced life's challenges.

Some people have lived here all their lives.
Others came to the region through work, military service, study or family and found a place they were proud to call home.
Wherever our journey began, our experiences become part of the story of the North East.

There is no need to remember every detail.
There is no pressure to answer every question.
Simply enjoy talking together.



## My Working Life

Work is about much more than earning a living.

It is about friendships, learning new skills, solving problems and taking pride in doing a job well.
Every role matters.

**Whether someone worked:**

- In healthcare.
- In education.
- In a shipyard.
- Down the pit.
- On a farm.
- In a shop.
- In an office.
- At sea.
- At home caring for family.

Every contribution helped build our communities.

### Let's Talk Together

- What was your first job?
- Which job did you enjoy most?
- What made a good workmate?
- What achievement makes you proud?

## My Home

Think about the place you called home.
It might have been:

- A terraced house.
- A farm.
- A cottage.
- A flat.
- A village.
- A busy town.
- A city street.

### Let's Talk Together

- What could you see from your front door?
- Who lived next door?
- Did everyone know one another?
- What sounds do you remember?
- What made your neighbourhood special?

## My Family

- Every family is different.
- Some are large.
- Some are small.
- Some are made through friendship as well as relatives.
- Every family matters.

### Let's Talk Together

- Who made you laugh the most?
- Who taught you something useful?
- Which family tradition do you remember most fondly?
- What advice has stayed with you throughout your life?

# Chapter Seventeen

## My Favourite Season

Think about the changing year.

**Did you enjoy:**

- Spring flowers?
- Summer holidays?
- Autumn colours?
- Winter evenings by the fire?

### Let's Talk Together

- Which season brings back the happiest memories?
- What did your family enjoy doing together?

## My Favourite Food

Food often reminds us of people we love.

### Let's Talk Together

- Who was the best cook in your family?
- Which meal always brings back happy memories?
- What was your favourite Sunday dinner?
- Which North East treat would you choose today?

## My Favourite Music

Music stays with us throughout life.

### Let's Talk Together

- Which song reminds you of someone special?
- Did you enjoy dancing?
- Which singer did you admire?
- What music makes you smile?

## My Favourite Place

Everyone has a place that feels special.

**Perhaps it is:**

- Bamburgh Beach.
- Durham Cathedral.
- The Quayside.
- Penshaw Monument.
- Holy Island.
- Jesmond Dene.
- Saltburn Pier.
- Kielder Water.
- A local park.
- A family garden.

Or perhaps it is simply the kitchen where everyone gathered together.

### Let's Talk Together

- Where do you feel happiest?
- What makes that place special?
- Who do you remember being there with?

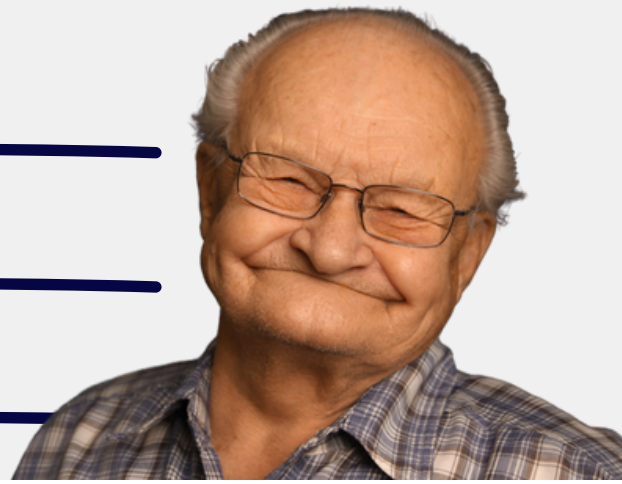
## Three Things That Make Me Smile

**Invite people to complete these sentences.**
**Today I am thankful for...**

1

2

3



# Chapter Seventeen

## North East Heritage Spotlight

**Community**
One of the qualities people most often associate with the North East is community.

Neighbours have long supported one another.
Whether through difficult winters, times of celebration or everyday life, people have worked together to make their communities welcoming places to live.

Acts of kindness are part of our heritage too.

**Ask the group:**
- What does being a good neighbour mean?
- Who helped your family when you needed support?
- How can we continue those traditions today?

## Tea Break Quiz

There are no factual questions in today's quiz.

**Instead, choose one question to answer together.**
- Which place in the North East always feels like home?
- Which smell reminds you of childhood?
- Which person has influenced your life the most?
- Which job are you proudest of?
- Which family tradition would you like to see continue?
- Which memory always makes you laugh?
- What advice would you give to a young person today?
- What does kindness mean to you?
- What makes the North East special?
- What are you most grateful for today?

Every answer is worth celebrating.

## Activity Together

**Our Community Tree**

Draw the outline of a large tree on a sheet of paper.
Invite everyone to write or draw one memory on a paper leaf.

**It could be:**
- A place.
- A person.
- A celebration.
- A favourite food.
- A song.
- A job.
- A holiday.
- A family tradition.

Stick each leaf onto the branches.
As the activity continues, the tree grows, just like a community grows through the experiences of the people who belong to it.
Display the finished tree where everyone can enjoy it.

## Reflection

The history of the North East is not only written in castles, cathedrals, rivers and famous landmarks.

- It is written in everyday lives.
- It is written in parents who worked hard for their families.
- In neighbours who looked after one another.
- In children who played safely in the street.
- In nurses, teachers, miners, engineers, fishermen, farmers, shopkeepers, carers, volunteers and countless others who quietly shaped their communities.
- Every person has added something to the story of the North East.
- Every story has value.
- Every voice deserves to be heard.

Thank you for sharing yours.

***"The greatest heritage of the North East is not its buildings or industries. It is its people."***

# Chapter Eigtheen

## The People Who Made the North East

**A Celebration of Lives**

"The greatest treasure of the North East has never been coal, ships or steel. It has always been its people."

When people think about the North East, they often think about famous landmarks.

They think about castles, cathedrals, bridges and beautiful coastlines.
They think about coal mining, shipbuilding, railways and engineering.
All of these things are important.
But none of them would exist without people.

Whether you were born in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick, Ashington, Hexham, Morpeth, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Shields, Sunderland, Seaham, Durham, Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle, Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar or anywhere in between, your story matters.

The North East has been shaped by millions of ordinary people doing extraordinary things every day.

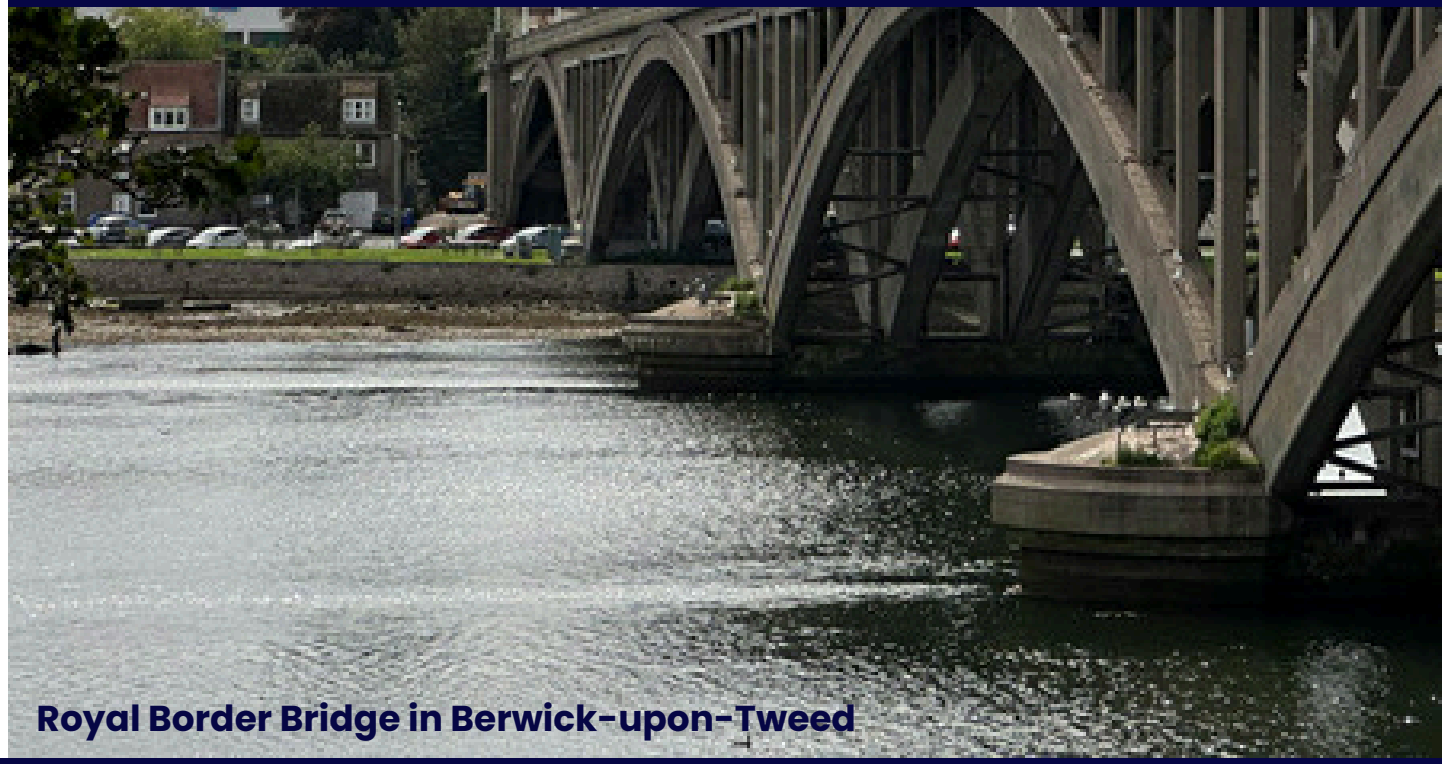
## A Lifetime of Change

**Many people reading this have lived through remarkable times.**

**You may remember:**

- **Homes without televisions.**
- **Coal fires in almost every room.**
- **Rationing after the Second World War.**
- **The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.**
- **The first family telephone.**
- **The arrival of colour television.**
- **Men walking to the pit or shipyard.**
- **Milk delivered to the doorstep.**
- **New schools, hospitals and roads being built.**
- **The opening of the Tyne and Wear Metro.**
- **Children playing safely in the street until teatime.**

**You have witnessed changes that younger generations know only through photographs and history books.**



**Royal Border Bridge in Berwick-upon-Tweed**

# Chapter Eighteen

## Skills That Built Communities

Many practical skills were once part of everyday life.

**People knew how to:**

- Mend clothes.
- Grow vegetables.
- Bake bread.
- Wallpaper a room.
- Knit socks.
- Repair bicycles.
- Build fences.
- Grow flowers.
- Catch fish.
- Keep hens.
- Make jam.
- Save carefully for important purchases.

These skills were passed from one generation to the next.
Today they remain an important part of the region's heritage.

## Looking After One Another

Across the North East, neighbours have always supported neighbours.

**If someone was poorly...**

- People called in.
- If heavy snow arrived...
- Neighbours cleared paths.
- If a new baby was born...
- Meals appeared.
- If someone lost a loved one...

Communities came together with kindness and compassion.

These traditions of helping one another continue today.

## What Makes a Good Neighbour?

Ask the group:

- Who was the kindest neighbour you remember?
- Did people leave their doors unlocked?
- Who always kept an eye on local children?
- What small acts of kindness do you remember?
- How did your community come together during difficult times?

## Wisdom Worth Sharing

Every person has learnt something during their lifetime.

Invite everyone to finish these sentences.

- "I have learnt that..."
- "The best advice I ever received was..."
- "If I could tell my younger self one thing..."
- "I am proud that I..."
- "My happiest place is..."
- "There are no wrong answers.

Some people may wish to write.
Others may prefer simply to talk.

## Did You Know?

- **Research shows that sharing life stories can support wellbeing, strengthen relationships and help others understand what is important to the person.**
- **Listening is one of the greatest gifts we can offer one another.**
- **North East Heritage Spotlight**
- **Community Spirit**
- **Visitors often describe the North East as one of the friendliest parts of Britain.**
- **While every community is different, many people speak warmly about neighbours helping neighbours, lifelong friendships and a strong sense of belonging.**

**These qualities continue to make the region a special place to live.**

**Ask the group:**

- **What makes someone a good friend?**
- **What does community mean to you?**
- **What are you most proud of about the North East?**

# Chapter Eigtheen

## Tea Break Conversation

**Today there are no quiz questions.**

**Instead, invite everyone to choose one topic.**

- **A place that changed your life.**
- **Someone you will never forget.**
- **A lesson life has taught you.**
- **Something that always makes you laugh.**
- **A favourite family tradition.**
- **A skill you would like younger people to learn.**
- **A moment when someone showed you kindness.**
- **Something that gives you hope.**

**There is no need to answer every question.**
**Sometimes simply listening is enough.**



## Activity Together

**A Letter to the Future**

Invite participants to imagine that someone in the North East will read their words in one hundred years' time. What would they like future generations to know?

Suggestions might include:

- What family meant.
- How communities helped each other.
- Why kindness matters.
- Favourite local places.
- Advice for younger people.
- Hopes for the future.

If someone prefers not to write, a volunteer, family member or member of staff can write their words for them. Display the finished letters or place them into a memory book.



**Beautiful sunrise over the northeast coast in Hartlepool, United Kingdom**

# Chapter Nineteen

## Our North East

A Celebration of Memories, Friendship and Belonging

***"Every memory shared today becomes part of tomorrow's history."***

As we reach the end of this journey through the North East, we hope this resource has reminded you of familiar places, favourite people and treasured moments. Perhaps it has brought back memories of a childhood spent playing in the street. Perhaps it has reminded you of a day at Bamburgh, a walk beside the River Tyne, a family picnic at Saltburn, shopping in Durham or listening to a brass band at the Durham Miners' Gala. Perhaps it has reminded you of someone special.

Whatever memories have come to mind, thank you for sharing them. Every conversation helps keep the history of our communities alive.

## The Story Continues

The North East has never stood still.
Each generation adds something new.
Children grow up.
Families welcome new members.
Communities change.
Old buildings find new purpose.
New traditions sit alongside old ones.
Throughout all these changes, one thing remains constant.
People continue to care for one another.
That is one of the North East's greatest strengths.



Northern Spire Bridge in Sunderland, North East England

# A Few Moments to Remember

**Take a quiet moment and think about these questions.**

There are no right or wrong answers.
You may wish to talk about them with family, friends or members of staff.

A place I have loved.....

A person who changed my life.....

A sound that reminds me of home.....

A smell I will never forget.....

A meal that always makes me smile.....

Something that makes me proud.....

Something I hope younger people will remember.....

.....

# Our Favourite North East Places

As a group, create a list of places that hold special memories.

**Perhaps they include:**

- Berwick-upon-Tweed
- Holy Island
- Bamburgh
- Alnwick
- Craster
- Seahouses
- Amble
- Morpeth
- Hexham
- Corbridge
- Newcastle
- Gateshead
- Tynemouth
- Whitley Bay
- South Shields
- Sunderland
- Seaham
- Durham
- Bishop Auckland
- Barnard Castle
- Hartlepool
- Stockton-on-Tees
- Middlesbrough
- Redcar
- Saltburn-by-the-Sea

## Places we have visited.....

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
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# Chapter Nineteen

## North East Heritage Spotlight

**Looking After Our Heritage**

Across the region, volunteers, museums, community groups and local historians help preserve the stories of the North East.

- Historic buildings are cared for.
- Old photographs are shared.
- Family stories are recorded.
- Traditional crafts are kept alive.

These efforts help ensure that future generations understand the people and places that shaped our communities.

Perhaps your own story will become part of that shared heritage too.

## A North East Promise

**Together, read these words aloud if you wish.**

- We will continue to share our stories.
- We will celebrate our communities.
- We will value kindness.
- We will remember those who came before us.
- We will welcome those who come after us.
- We will be proud of the North East and the people who call it home.

## Group Activity

**Our Community Memory Quilt**

Draw a large patchwork quilt made from empty squares.

Invite everyone to decorate one square.

**Ideas include:**

- A favourite flower.
- A football scarf.
- A lighthouse.
- A miner's lamp.
- A ship.
- A puffin.
- A stottie.
- A family home.
- A cup of tea.
- A bridge.
- A castle.
- A brass band instrument.
- A fishing boat.
- A favourite pet.
- A smiling face.

Display the completed quilt in a communal area so that everyone can enjoy it.



Penshaw Monument

## North East Blessing

**Wherever the road has taken you,**
**May you always find friendship.**
**May familiar songs bring comfort.**
**May laughter be shared often.**
**May the sea air refresh you.**
**May the rivers remind you that life keeps flowing.**
**May the hills bring peace.**
**May your memories always be treated with kindness.**
**And may you always know that your story matters.**

**With grateful thanks**
**This resource has been produced with the generous support of**

HADRIAN TRUST

**Their commitment to strengthening communities and supporting the wellbeing of older people has helped make this resource possible. May it encourage conversation, laughter, connection and companionship for many years to come.**

## Final Reflection

- **The North East is often described through its landmarks, industries and history. Yet its greatest legacy is something far more precious.**
- **It is the people.**
- **The people who worked hard.**
- **Who cared deeply.**
- **Who welcomed neighbours.**
- **Who raised families.**
- **Who built communities.**
- **Who found humour in difficult times.**
- **Who looked after one another.**
- **Who passed on traditions.**
- **Who shared stories.**
- **Who never stopped hoping.**

**This resource has celebrated castles, coastlines, rivers, railways, food, music and community.**

**Above all, it has celebrated you.**

**Thank you for allowing your memories to become part of this journey.**

**The North East is richer because of the lives that have been lived here.**

**And every one of those lives deserves to be remembered.**

This resource is free to download and use by everyone, including care homes, hospitals, community services, friends, family carers, and anyone supporting older people and adults with care and support needs.

If you've found it helpful and would like to support NAPA, please make a donation.

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