

PLACES TO GO *November*



PERUSE the shelves at The Vintage Emporium



STROLL along the town's pretty cobbled streets

FURTHER AFIELD



Don't miss the impressive **Hexham Abbey** (hexhamabbey.org.uk, above) before heading out of town to discover the Roman history of the surrounding landscape. The crag of **Steel Rigg** has impressive views of Hadrian's Wall but, with its fort excavations and amazing artefacts (including 2,000-year-old writing tablets), **Vindolanda** is a must (vindolanda.com). Also worth signing up for is a guided walk of the **National Park** led by the knowledgeable Patrick Norris (footstepsnorthumberland.co.uk) and followed by an ancient **pottery workshop** with Graham Taylor (pottedhistory.co.uk).



ENJOY an ancient pottery class



TREAT yourself at Grants bakery



STAY at Fairshaw Rigg

A NIGHT AND A DAY... IN HEXHAM

Stay... in home-from-home, five-star comfort at Fairshaw Rigg, two miles outside this Northumbrian market town and run by owners Paul and Kathryn Shrimpton. They have a menagerie of animals, which includes a herd of black Nero alpacas (cosy knitwear and luxury duvets, made from their wool, are available to buy). Breakfast is served in a private orangery with views across the Tyne Valley – enjoy seasonal fruit compote, locally sourced sausages, bacon and kippers, and eggs from the Shrimpton's free-range hens. Double B&B from £90 (01434 602630; fairshawrigg.co.uk).

Eat... enjoy Northumbrian ingredients and an open fire at The Rat Inn (theratinn.com) or sample award-winning French-style cuisine, including snails, duck confit and tarte tatin at Bouchon Bistrot (bouchonbistrot.co.uk). For afternoon tea you've plenty of choice: Grants bakery has a delectable selection of cakes and delicate pastries (grantsbakery.co.uk); head to The Cedar Tree, a community church-run café serving up traditional sponges, plus unique gift items (hexhamcc.com). Be tempted by hand-baked treats as well as local charcuterie and chocolate in Deli at Number 4 (deliatnumber4.co.uk).

Browse... The Vintage Emporium (01434 602734) and Ashbourne House Antiques (01434 607294), for second-hand delights at great prices, and Unique In Glass for local artist Willa Story's sculptures and tree decorations (uniqueinglass.com). But for gifts that give back, visit The Dragonfly Shop, part of a charity founded by local teenager Josie Grove that supports children and young people living with cancer (josiedragonfly.org). Cogito Books is a family-run bookshop (01434 602555), while Woolballoo stocks colourful haberdashery (woolballoo.com) and The Pinfold has beautiful stationery (01434 607621).



LOCAL LANDMARK

Hadrian's Wall is 73 miles long and measures six metres high and eight feet wide in some places. It took 15,000 men six years to build.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY; ELPA; GETTY; EMMA PRITCHARD; ILLUSTRATIONS BY JO BIRD

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Don't miss Hexham's Christmas Market, where more than 80 festive stalls line the streets and there's carol singing, mulled wine and reindeer, too. 12-13 December (visitnorthumberland.com).