

# DERBY: all the latest news, upcoming events and blogs

JANUARY 2026

## LATEST NEWS

### **Derby, the city where modern art began**

This is quite a claim. For any city in the world. But for Derby to even be a part of the conversation, when such grand matters of art are discussed in the finest museums and galleries around the globe, speaks volumes for the fact that the city is being talked of as the place where one of the biggest tipping points in art history took place - from "traditional", to "modern". And it's writer and art historian Matthew Wilson, who has opened the debate through BBC Culture Online, by claiming, [Why this 1768 painting could be the real birth of modern art](#). The painting he is referring to is Joseph Wright of Derby's An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump (1768) - one of The National Gallery's Top 10 most requested paintings; and presently one of the many stars of the show at The National's exhibition which runs to 10 May, *Wright of Derby: From the Shadows*. "While many argue that 'modern art' began in the 1800s," writes Wilson. "Could it actually have started with Joseph Wright of Derby's An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump, nearly a century before?"

### **Going loco down at The Engine Room**

A new dining area in Derby, located on Riverlights Boulevard in Derby, just metres from the River Derwent, has brought more "upscale-casual dining" to the heart of the city centre. Offering "bold flavours, an inviting atmosphere, and an easy-going approach to service", [The Engine Room](#) doffs its Guard's cap to the city's rich railway history. Located within the Holiday Inn that is soon to be reinvented as a the first Voco Suites offering in the UK, The Engine Room has been created not only as a place to eat, but also a place for locals and visitors to the city to gather, share and savour.

### **Spooky goings-on in Derby city centre**

The [UK Ghost Story Festival](#) returns to Derby in 2026, from 27 February to 1 March, for a spirited weekend in a brand new home. Regarded as one of the UK's most haunted cities Derby QUAD will be hosting three days of author interviews, talks, workshops, panels - with book and merchandise sales running throughout the weekend. A full list of what's on at the festival can be accessed by [clicking here](#). Tickets are now on sale, with weekend passes priced at £80, and a Saturday event pass at £35.

---o0o---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **The Game's Afoot**

2 January to 8 February 2026

There's an opportunity to [spend some time at 221b Baker Street](#) with the world's greatest detective, from the turn of the year and all the way through to 8 February, as Derby QUAD spans the decades of the super-sleuth. From some of the earliest screen adaptations of the silent era, through the iconic Basil Rathbone interpretation, to the gothic Hammer Studios and the wry comic stylings of Billy Wilder - there promises to be something for everyone who's a fan of Sherlock Holmes...

### **Epiphany at Derby Cathedral**

4 January 2026

The Christmas journey continues at Epiphany, when we remember the arrival of the wise men, and their gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. Music for Derby Cathedral's [Epiphany Carol Service](#) will be led by the Lay Clerks of the Cathedral Choir, with more congregational carols for the Epiphany season.

### **Take a look at the world of anime**

10 January 2026

Manga Entertainment launched in the UK in 1991, immediately creating a subculture of fans devoted to the new and [spectacular world of Japanese animation](#). For an anime fan a trip to HMV or the Virgin Megastore was not complete without heading down the VHS aisle to see what new and mild-altering Japanese animated film or series Manga had brought to the UK. Now, QUAD journeys back in time for four big screen showings of some 80s/90s anime classics in a single day. Tickets cost £30 per head.

### **Discovering Joseph Wright's *Indian Widow***

17 January 2026

With a major exhibition at The National Gallery, and exhibitions and event lined-up throughout 2026, this is "The Year of Wright". And in January, Derby Museums is honoured to be welcoming Dr Stephanie Pratt - acclaimed art historian, consultant, scholar, author and member of the Dakota Nation - to help [take a look at Wright's painting of The Indian Widow](#) (1783-84) in ways few will ever have had opportunity to do before.

### **Make Derby your base to see the Ashbourne Royal Shrovetide Football match**

17-18 February 2026

Unlike a conventional football match, [Shrovetide Football](#) is much longer than a regular football match and is played over two eight-hour periods. The goals are three miles apart and there are very few rules. The ball is rarely kicked but instead moves through a giant 'hug'. There is no set pitch: the game is played throughout the entire town, so shops and businesses board up their windows in preparation!

### **8 Game Masters. 6 Hours of Terror.**

21 February 2026

Mythic Echoes present [Vampire Games Day II](#) - a celebration of vampire-themed roleplaying games in The Museum on The Wardwick. Dracula, who first "appeared" in Derby, had an indelible influence on gaming, with the story reimagining how a monster can be presented. These influences have percolated into a multitude of tabletop roleplaying games, where vampires are presented as either antagonists, protagonists or as player characters...

---o0o---

## **BLOGS & FEATURES**

### **Unmissable entertainment in the heart of the city**

Opened in Spring, [Vaillant Live](#) is a cutting-edge venue in Derby, which stages concerts, family events, sports, and conferences. Featuring a state-of-the-art 3,500-capacity auditorium with premium seating and hospitality options, the venue offers unmatched flexibility for events ranging from live performances to conferences and award shows. For full details of upcoming events, [click here](#).

### **Get Ready to Roll: Introduction to Track Cycling!**

Ever wondered what it's like to ride on a Velodrome cycle track? Now's your chance to find out. [Taster sessions at Derby Arena](#) are the perfect way for visitors to the city to dip their toes into the world of track cycling, whether as a curious beginner or someone in search of a new experience.

**ENDS**

---o0o---

**For further details, visit:**

<https://www.visitderby.co.uk>.

**For all media enquiries, interview opportunities and images, please contact:**

Michelle Booth, Tourism Officer

Tel: 01332 643414

Email: [michelle.booth@derby.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.booth@derby.gov.uk)