



## HERCEG NOVI'S INVITATION TO ALL

### COME AND ENJOY THE MIMOSA FESTIVAL AND THE FIRST NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD DAY

In 2019 it's 50 years since the very first of the famous annual mimosa festivals in Herceg Novi, our Newcastle in Montenegro. This year the municipality has decided to organise a "Newcastles of the World" day and include it in the festival. It'll be **Sunday 3rd February**, with music and other cultural activities throughout the town - and artists from other Newcastles are invited to visit and perform. And of course, tourists from around the Newcastles are invited to enjoy the flowers, music and colourful marching bands, and the many heritage attractions of the city, especially the stairs and squares of the old town – and including more than one castle!

See page 4 for more details about how you can sign up to perform and for more information and photographs of Herceg Novi.



**Congratulations to Nové Zámky Mayor Otokar Klein on his re-election - read the interview with him on page 7**



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K	A	N	A	I	D	N	I	E	E	U	C	C	G	E	A	E	B	NEUBURG
P	L	Y	M	E	L	L	M	H	Q	M	L	E	C	M	G	H	W	JAUNPILS

Why not try our Wordsearch (right) during your festive break?

## CONGRATULATIONS LIGITA !



It's been a double celebration in **Jaunpils**, our Newcastle in Latvia - marking the centenary of the independence of Latvia on November 18th 1918, and also congratulations to Ligita Gintere, council chairperson, who has been awarded the prestigious Cross of Recognition by the President of Latvia for her services to the country, to local government and to her community !

Ligita is Latvian representative on the EU Committee of the Regions and the Commissions for Citizenship & External Affairs and for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research & Culture. She is also Chair of the Education, Culture and Sports Committee of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.



It's combined with a skating arena for Christmas time. See pages 2 and 3 inside for more photos of how our different "Newcastles" prepare for Christmas.

We all know that the Christmas markets in Germany are very special - and the market in Neuburg an der Donau is no exception.

## ALSO INSIDE

p 5 - latest on the Newcastles Passport - time to sign up and promote it?

p 8 - castle managers initiative

Also - sport, youth, tourism, business, heritage, culture and lots of other news





# IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME !

## PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS AROUND THE NEWCASTLES - CAPTURED IN PHOTOS



Fabio Bongiovanni and his fellow Cabinet Members in **Neuchâtel**, Switzerland can be rightly proud of the city's magnificent Christmas lights display (right) - and we like what he's wearing too!



New Castle's 2018

*Light Up Night Parade*

New Castle, Pennsylvania - parade time and (below) the popular Christmas ice rink. Happy Holly Days!



Hard at work in **Jaunpils**, Latvia, are the little elves who help Father Christmas/Santa Claus/St Nicholas at Christmas time!



Above - the Snowman, one of the many Christmas window images this year from Fenwick, the **Newcastle upon Tyne** department store (right)

Right - Santa drops into the Christmas market in **Nyborg**, Denmark



left - some of the marchers in the Santa Parade in **Newcastle, Ontario**, Canada



There's a huge advent wreath that decorates the main square with a single beautiful candle; there are also children's performances, good music and a magical atmosphere - and of course Santa Claus greeting the children with gifts.

In **Nové Zámky**, Slovakia (*below, left*) the whole of the month of December is filled with a rich cultural and religious programme, from the Advent to the Three Kings.



Above - one of the Christmas angels from the exhibition currently on display in the Tannery Gallery in **Nové Hradý**, Czech Republic.



# IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME !

## Saint Nicolas – Sinterklaas – Santa Claus

Robert Dulfer of Nove Hradý tells us the background

In Nové Hradý, we have just celebrated “Mikulas”. If the name looks familiar, no wonder; many (mainly European) countries still celebrate December 6 as the memorial day of Saint Nicolas, third century bishop of Myra, and patron saint of sailors and children. And for our American friends, the Dutch interpretation of Saint Nicolas is called Sinterklaas and is the origin of the Santa Claus known in America.

In most European countries, the role of Saint Nikolas is clear; he is a dignified person reading from his book which children have been good and which bad, and rewards or punishes them. It is in the appearance of his helpers that the local traditions differ and the story (and the celebrations) become interesting.

In Central Europe, the helpers are devil-like figures and their origins go back to pre-Christian Nordic and Greek mythology. Dressed in animal hides, with horns, and a tail, they look like satyrs and fauns. Large masks or make-up are used to strengthen the scary impression. They carry chains indicating they had been tamed and are now helping their Saint. They also often carry bells, large jute sacks, and rods of birch branches. In the Czech Republic, on Mikulas’ eve, groups consisting of one saint, often one angel, and several devils roamed the streets and visit the houses to find out which children have been good and which have been bad, and chase away bad spirits. This dressing tradition has survived till to today, and is still very pronounced and purposely scary. In the historic forge in Nové Hradý, we do Devil’s Forging” with two or three devils blacksmithing, and in the living quarters we serve traditional Czech Christmas sweets and work with children, for example decorating gingerbreads.



The early Dutch settlers in the USA took the tradition of Sinterklaas with them to their new homeland, and presents sent to the settlers from the Dutch relatives played a role in establishing the Christmas tradition



Other settlers followed the tradition, and added their own parts, like the reindeer and north pole (from Scandinavian settlers) and the elves. And the extra weight Santa has in the USA compared to the slender and tall guy from Europe; blame that on Coca Cola newspaper advertisements from the 1920s and 1930s. That’s the real origin of the large Santa Claus appearance as we know it today.

## A DICKENS EXPERIENCE

New Castle, Delaware, USA has held its annual “Dickens Experience” weekend with a Victorian Ball (“Fezziwig's Ball”), Victorian teas, period music, characters from the novels of celebrated Victorian author Charles Dickens in costume throughout town, performances of “A Christmas Carol” and much more.



The festival of St Nicholas took place in Neufchâteau (“Newcastle” in Vosges in Grand Est in north eastern France) on December 8th, beginning with fireworks. Next was the appearance of St. Nicholas, the handing over the keys of the City by the Mayor to St Nicholas for the Christmas period, and the parade of St. Nicholas in the streets of the city (thanks to Vosges Matin for the photo).



And the following weekend there's was a host of St Nicholas on motorbikes riding through the city!





# HERCEG NOVI'S INVITATION

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The mimosa festival runs throughout the month of February, and the visiting performers will be able to take part in other activities on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd February as part of the opening weekend programme – the opening ceremony, an open-air fish and wine celebration and a fun masked ball. There will be a Newcastles of the World exhibition in the entrance hall of Dvorana Park, the city theatre.

Warmer spring weather comes early to Montenegro and whilst much of Europe still has snow for many more weeks, the beautiful yellow mimosas are flowering in Herceg Novi in a city where sunshine and flowers are the watchword. The city is picturesquely located on the Adriatic coast at the entrance to the beautiful Bay of Kotor, Europe's most southerly fjord, and at the foot of Mount Orjen. Close by is the walled city of Kotor, a World Heritage Site.

Herceg Novi can provide some free and low-cost accommodation for visiting performers and Newcastles of the World can give a little financial support towards travel costs. Contact David Faulkner ([newcastlesoftheworld@gmail.com](mailto:newcastlesoftheworld@gmail.com)) or Simonida Kordic, Manager for International Cooperation at the Herceg Novi Municipality ([simonida.kordic@hercegnovi.me](mailto:simonida.kordic@hercegnovi.me)) if you're interested in performing or have questions.

For more information about Herceg Novi check out from the city's website <http://www.hercegnovi.me/en/> and these tourism websites

<http://www.hercegnovi.travel/en/>

<https://www.visit-montenegro.com/main-cities/herceg-novi/>

[https://wikitravel.org/en/Herceg\\_Novi](https://wikitravel.org/en/Herceg_Novi)

<https://waytomonte.com/en/p-931-the-old-town-herceg-novi>

<https://www.montenegrpulse.com/herceg-novi.html>





# THINKING OF THE NEXT SUMMER'S HOLIDAY? WHY NOT VISIT ANOTHER NEWCASTLE?



For many of us this time of year we start to think about our holiday plans for the coming year. If you are planning a trip to another country, have you considered visiting the Newcastle of the World community? We have a special scheme to support you do that and make your trip away extra special through our Newcastle Passport scheme.

## What is the Newcastle Passport?

The Newcastle Passport scheme promotes tourism and friendship between Newcastle around the world. Each Newcastle taking part has carefully selected a series of special offers just for visitors from other Newcastle. These could be a customised programme if the visitor has any special interests – places to visit or people to meet, or special discounts from local businesses.



Visit Rabati fortress, Akhaltsikhe, Georgia

The latest promotions are shown on each Newcastle page taking part in the Passport scheme.

### Exclusive offers include:

Invite to a tea-making ceremony in Shinshiro, Japan

Meet the Mayor of Neuburg, Germany

Free chocolate gifts from Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Guided Amish tours of New Castle, Pennsylvania

Restaurant offers in Newcastle upon Tyne, England

Free entry into Rabati castle in Akhaltsikhe, Georgia

Become a real medieval hero in a romantic seventh century-old castle in Jaunpils, Latvia



## Jaunpils, Latvia latest to join scheme

Jaunpils is the 7<sup>th</sup> Newcastle to join up to Passport and has an amazing selection of offers for visitors. Jaunpils castle is a rare seventh century medieval castle preserving its historical look. Built in 1301 as Livonia Order fortress, for more than 350 years the palace was inhabited by the von der Recke family.

Nowadays the castle is the centre of Jaunpils social life. The picturesque landscape and social life folklore is a background for sideshows for tourists. Together with monks, jesters, lords of the manor and servants, tourists have the chance to become a real medieval hero.

The hotel is located in the most ancient residential part of the castle. While the baron is away, the guests can choose for their overnight stay from a selection of the baron's apartments, cosy double rooms and economic, multi-bed rooms.

There's a huge range of exclusive activities in Jaunpils on offer for visitors from other Newcastle. Below are just a few of them - visit the Passport section of the Newcastle of the World website for full details:

*Meet the Mayor of Jaunpils • Explore the secrets of Latvian crafts visiting a weaving workshop • Visit Knight school and practise medieval sports • Taste Newcastle by visiting the local brewery for "Jaunpils beer" or cheese and milk products*



If you'd like to find out more about Passport or join up your Newcastle to the scheme contact [zelie@zelieguerin.com](mailto:zelie@zelieguerin.com) for more details, or visit <https://newcastlesoftheworld.com/projects/passport/>

Please note these special offers are only open to visitors to each Newcastle and are not available to residents of those cities. Thanks for your co-operation.



# EVENTS

## CHOCOLATE TIME !!!!!

**Neuchâtel**, our Newcastle in Switzerland, celebrated the fifth edition of its wonderful Chocolatissimo! Festival in early November. The origin of Chocolatissimo is the chocolate festival at the Museum of Art and History created in 2009 as part of the exhibition "the world according to Suchard". From 2014, the Tourism Department of the City of Neuchâtel, nine confectioners-chocolatiers in Neuchâtel and Tourism Neuchâtelois came together to set up a festive tasting event, and now it is possible to celebrate the chocolate heritage of the canton of Neuchâtel annually, highlighting the quality of the many different chocolate producers and shops in the region.

Each year three new plates of chocolate with different and original flavours are created at Chocolatissimo and then made available to the public.



## "RAINTREE COUNTY" is INDIANA (NEW CASTLE/HENRY COUNTY)

"Raintree County" is a 1957 technicolor melodramatic film set in **New Castle, Indiana** during the American Civil War, starring Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor, Eva Marie Saint, and Lee Marvin. It was adapted from the 1948 novel of the same name by Indiana writer Ross Lockridge Jr.

Back in 2015, thanks to the efforts of Henry County photographer and historian Mark Sean Orr, the New Castle/Henry County connection to the book and film was recognised through the installation of a commemorative plaque. The plaque had been scripted by Larry Lockridge, son of Ross.



This October two further ceremonies took place in New Castle to honour and continue the "Raintree". A lilac bush was planted at the Henry County Historical Society and two golden raintrees were planted at the Henry County Courthouse.



The lilac was a gift from actor Christopher Riordan who worked in the MGM adaptation of Lockridge's book and came to know Elizabeth Taylor and Montgomery Clift.. The golden raintree was a gift from the family of author of Ross Lockridge Jr.

The novel tells the story of John Witcliff Shawnessy who in real life was Ross Lockridge's grandfather John Wesley Shockley, a poet, newspaper man, Civil War veteran and educator. The novel is told in a series of flashbacks from the vantage point of one day, July 4 (Independence Day) in 1892 and is an account of Shawnessy's life up until that day. Organisers with Mark Sean Orr were Kaye Ford (Historical Society) and Kim Cronk (County Commissioner).

The golden raintree lends grace and charm to the landscape throughout the entire year—rare yellow tree blossoms in the late spring and summer, graceful paper lanterns dangling from the branches in autumn and winter.



## KABUKI TIME IN SHINSHIRO

Last month in our Newcastle in Japan, it was "Kabuki in **Shinshiro**", the annual celebratory performance of the classical Japanese dance-drama. Kabuki theatre is known for the stylisation of its drama and for the elaborate make-up worn by its performers



## VISITORS FOR LATVIA CENTENARY EXHIBITION

The Latvian Ambassador to the United Kingdom H.E. Ms Baiba Braže (second left) was joined by visitors Ligita Gintere (4th left), chair of **Jaunpils** Council and colleagues Baiba Rasa and Kristine Liepina from Jaunpils, also members of the Latvian community in the **Newcastle upon Tyne** area, deputy Lord Mayor David Cook, Newcastle's of the World's Zélie Guérin and other local guests at Newcastle Library in November for the opening of an exhibition of posters/cartoons marking the centenary of Latvian independence.





Many congratulations to  
**OTOKAR KLEIN**  
who has been re-elected Mayor of  
Nové Zámky, Slovakia - with over  
70% of the vote !  
He is the subject of our Mayor  
profile in this issue of the  
newsletter.



**What did you do before you entered politics?** Before I entered politics and became mayor of the city, I worked in the arts, studying opera singing and acting. Even as a student I became a soloist of the Slovak National Theater Opera, National Theater Prague and the State Opera in Budapest. I was honoured to perform at the State Opera Vienna, in Milan La Scala and in many large theaters and concert halls of Italy, France, Belgium, Russia, Spain, Holland, Japan and the USA.

**What made you want to be a politician? How did it happen?** I stood for the mayor of the city mainly because I was convinced that our city wasn't going in the right direction. During my work abroad, but also within Slovakia, I had the opportunity to compare. I felt there was stagnation in Nové Zámky and, unfortunately, unnecessary conflicts inside the city management. I wanted to help my city as I was still coming back regularly, although I had offers from elsewhere. I decided to live with my family in this town.

**What achievements are you most proud of for your city?** In 2014, when I took up office, the city was in a sad financial situation. The coffers were empty, we inherited unpaid invoices for almost € 3 million and there was a lack of trust. Primarily I am proud of the fact that we have managed to reverse the unfavourable economic situation; we now pay our commitments on time, and in recent years we are the city with the fastest reducing debt in Slovakia, according to the ratings of independent institutions. We are also proud of the fact that after many decades we have completed a complex road reconstruction in the city, and we have resurfaced 11 roads as an initial step. We have also begun to reconstruct the pavement surfaces for pedestrians, already 60 of them. A further important step in transport has been the creation of new parking spaces. Additionally, we managed to reconstruct the national cultural monument Jazdiareň - one of the remaining preserved historical buildings in Nové Zámky. There have also been improvements to the buildings of elementary and nursery schools and the grammar school. In the field of leisure we now have new and refurbished playgrounds and other revitalised recreational areas. An important refurbished facility is the summer swimming area Emil Tatarik, where we now have record numbers of users.

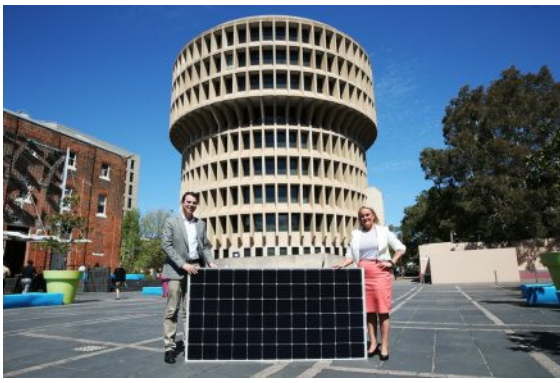
**What are the biggest challenges facing Nové Zámky?** We still have several tasks that I want to complete. We want to continue the reconstruction of the roads and pathways, the reconstruction of the swimming area and sports facilities. The most obvious problem of our city is through traffic, which, unfortunately, has no direct benefit to the city and is outside our control, so we will have to influence the state institutions to deal with it.

**What are your other interests?** My greatest interests are currently my work for the city, and partly music and art, but, if my work allows me, I like to spend my free time with nature.

**What are your hopes for the Newcastles alliance?** We are hoping for additional opportunities to promote our city, and find new contacts in the community for culture, sport, education and business. "Newcastles of the World" shows that there are prospects for new collaborations for municipalities with others that have similar names but also similar experiences and ambitions.

**What would you say to persuade people to visit Nové Zámky?** First of all, visit our wonderful reconstructed thermal swimming area and the unique former Imperial Royal Riding School. You should experience our unique historical catacombs - underground corridors built at the same time as our Franciscan monastery and church. The attraction of our city is enhanced by its location - with easily access to major cities such as Budapest, Vienna and the Slovakian capital Bratislava. There are many events that display our traditional folk culture - and last but not least, you'll enjoy the friendliness of the local people!





We reported in the last issue that the City of **Newcastle Australia** had taken top honours for its work on the climate change frontline at the Cities Power Partner Summit Awards. This is just part of a wide-ranging action programme within the city.

Lord Mayor Nuatlai Nelmes said ""With construction currently underway on the Summerhill Solar Farm, and the upgrade of more than 5,300 streetlights to LEDs beginning next month, we are on track to exceed both our energy-efficiency reduction and renewable energy targets by 2020. We are installing electric vehicle charging stations, replacing our ageing fleet with electric vehicles and working with experts like the CSIRO Energy Centre and a growing clean-tech industry on cutting-edge smart building research and demonstration projects."

One innovative concept being explored by the City is a virtual microgrid across the Region. Microgrids are small networks of electricity users who rely on local electricity generation, delivering energy security, sustainability and cost savings for those involved. The City has also been a finalist in the NSW Green Globes Innovation Category and was awarded best Smart City Strategy in the Country.

## The castle-managers network discussed at the Shinshiro conference is one step closer after Jaunpils visit to Newcastle upon Tyne

During the visit to Newcastle upon Tyne in November by Ligita Gintere, Baiba Rasa and Kristine Liepina (Jaunpils castle manager) - discussions were held about how take forward the idea of an information and best-practice network for castle managers in the different Newcastles. A full-day visit to Newcastle castle for discussions with Ben Smith and his team confirmed the enthusiasm for such a link-up. There was excellent sharing of ideas about such topics as marketing, community engagement, educational programmes, the use of volunteers, finance and fundraising and events programmes. In the new year the Newcastles of the World secretariat will take these ideas to the managers of other castles and similar fortifications in our network to discuss the most effective method of cooperation.



Tominaga Shrine festival has been held every year in October in **Shinshiro**, Japan for over 400 years. The festival celebrates the god of fire among other things. During the three days of the festival teams are formed with their own team colours. Highlights of the festival are:

Noh and Kyogen performances (by local children and adults), lion dance (shishi mai), shinto ritual, traditional dances Mikoshi parade (featuring 12 floats), and dramatic hand-held fireworks display.





# YOUTH

The youth parliament of **Neuchâtel** (PJNE) recently hosted the 26th national conference of youth parliaments of Switzerland with nearly 180 young people from 34 youth parliaments from all over the country and abroad.

## Neuchâtel hosts youth parliament gathering



There was a rich programme of workshops, discussions (including "speed debating") and visits. This year, the conference also welcomed 24 participants from six foreign youth parliaments. For Patrizia Nideröst, head of the Swiss Federation of Youth Parliaments "the exchange with young people from other political and linguistic content is a real enrichment." Esther Kirk, 17 (pictured in discussion above) agreed. Coming from **Newcastle upon Tyne**, England (and just after attending our Newcastles of the World conference in Shinshiro) she said "I discovered a lot of project ideas - for example, I did not know speed debating. I like this active and somewhat intimate exchange on an equal footing with politicians. I think we're all more likely to participate more in the discussion than during round tables."

## Nové Zámky - a youth - friendly place



In **Nové Zámky**, a project started in 2016 in collaboration with the Slovak Children's Foundation. It began with mapping the real needs of children and young people in the town. The mapping results resulted in two main outcomes. The first was to open the Teen Cafe Club, a informal drop-in centre for all ages 13 to 30. The café is free of charge and open every Saturday. It offers a safe environment and a varied programme of activities.



The second result is that the city council approved the Community Work Plan for Children and Young People in the town of Nové Zámky for the years 2019 – 2023, as one of the first places in Slovakia. As part of the initiative local schools are setting up rest zones and clubs.



## BREANA'S OUR ADVOCATE !

Breana Endsley of **New Castle, Indiana, USA** was a representative to our recent Newcastles of the World conference in Japan - pictured in Shinshiro with Rozita Leatham of Newcastle upon Tyne (right). Breana found the experience enriching and was more than willing to take up an opportunity to speak to the New Castle Rotary Club about Newcastles of the World and her experience in Japan. She is pictured (left) with Rotary President Chris Williams.



In **Jaunpils**, Latvia, school pupils regularly visit the дума (council) to learn about its role and services, and about how local democracy works. The last visit was hosted by Chief Executive Officer Peteris Baranovskis who fielded questions such as what are your challenges, tell us about what projects are being planned - and how often mistakes are made !

The apprentices and interns of **Neuchâtel** have their names hanging on the "tree of training" in the city centre, where the city council, hosted an event to celebrate the young people who started their training this autumn.

They were training for a huge range of jobs - from teachers to drivers of heavy goods vehicles and ambulances, horticulturists, planners, information officers, social care workers, even a lumberjack and a cartoonist!

## 18 years, and life ahead!!

At the beginning of November, young people from the city of **Neuchâtel** who reached their majority (age 18) this year were invited to a ceremony in their honour at the Apollo Cinema (Cinepel), with all the municipal council members. After hearing the speech of President Christine Gaillard, each who wished to took part in a photoshoot for an Instagram post.





Below is a very interesting interview in the magazine "Japan Today" with Carole Marullaz from Neuchâtel who was on placement in Shinshiro from last summer helping with all the preparations for our conference there, and with other international work. We all say thank you Carole!

# I live in Japan

Interview Series of Foreigners Who Live in Japan

Vol. 102 | Interviewed & Written by Minobu Kondo

## Carole Marullaz

From Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Occupation: Coordinator for International Relations for the City Hall of Shinshiro, Aichi

Duration living in Japan: 8 months

Why do you live in Japan?

The job was a great opportunity to discover the country from the inside



### What do you do in Japan?

I am a coordinator for international relations at the city hall of Shinshiro, in Aichi. Our main job is to organize the 20th Anniversary Conference of the Newcastles of the World Alliance, a network of cities that share the same name ("New Castle"). Around 100 delegates from all over the world will gather in Shinshiro in October for a week to discuss the best ways



to foster the Alliance through exchanges, for example in education or in tourism.

### What do you like the most about your job?

I love how diverse it is. We had to organize everything from scratch; therefore, it goes from practical matter, like meal planning, to deep thoughts about the contents of the sessions. It is also made of a lot of exchanges with amazing people, the delegates of course, but also citizens and local volunteers, as well as the youth involved in the process. The people are the core of this conference, and it is inspiring and empowering to work with them. Moreover, working for the city hall allows me to truly experience the Japanese culture, thanks to my colleagues and the working environment. I really appreciate that opportunity. Finally, I love and unequivocally support that it promotes cultural exchanges between different countries. They are immensely important for our personal development and the development of our communities.



### Why did you choose to live in Shinshiro in Aichi prefecture? How is the life there?

My hometown in Switzerland, Neuchâtel, is a member of the Newcastles of the World Alliance, and so is Shinshiro. My job had been created as part of the exchanges within the Alliance, therefore, I did not choose Shinshiro. However, I'm genuinely happy to have ended up in this small city. The landscape is beautiful and the life here is very traditional, and I get the chance to discover a part of Japan that I would not have seen by staying in a big city. For example, I have attended several festivals in local neighborhoods that were truly breath-taking. I also had the opportunity to visit traditional-style houses or hotels that are so different from what I am used to, back in Switzerland. Moreover, people are all extremely friendly and welcoming, especially as I'm one of the few foreigners in the city.



### What do you miss about your maternal country living in Japan?

Bread! Nothing here can compete with our bread. I also miss being able to interact with everybody I meet, whenever I need. Here, only a few people speak English and it can be very frustrating to not be able to communicate with someone in a café, at the post office or even in the street. Finally, I miss the vegetarian or vegan-friendly places, because there are only a few restaurants that offer this option around Shinshiro, and even, in the bigger cities, they are more the exception than the rule.



### Which places in Japan do you recommend that foreigners see?

Tokyo is obviously a must see, but I think that visitors should take the time to explore the countryside of Japan as well. I would, very subjectively, recommend Shinshiro, because I have discovered natural wonders around there, and I will never get bored of the luxurious forests surrounding the city. If foreigners want to get a glimpse of the traditions, that are such a large part of the Japanese culture, they should definitely check out a smaller city than the most touristic ones, as amazing as those are. I also had the chance to travel around the Kii Peninsula during my holidays, and I was awed by this region, a paradise for trail lovers.

### What parts of Japanese culture do you recommend that foreign people try to experience?

Onsen, definitely! Those baths are luxurious and very relaxing, and it is fascinating to see Japanese from every background sharing this habit. I would also recommend having dinner and drinks in an izakaya, where Japanese people meet after work to drink.



**Minobu Kondo**  
Photojournalist in Tokyo, writing for Japanese and American magazines. Publishing an essay "101 of green spaces" with the other Japanese artists such as Kiyohito Minami, Longgang on Japanese, English and French.



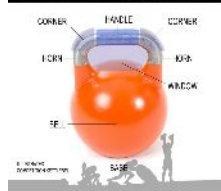


In Nyborg, Denmark, Mayor Kenneth Muhs has hosted the annual event to welcome and congratulate sports men and women from the city who have achieved national success or represented the country internationally. This included off-road racer (controlled cars) Jesper Rasmussen, young chess champion Albert Mechlenburg Møller and the kettlebell lifters who not only won national titles but also represented Denmark in the IKMF World Cup in the Kettlebell Marathon (see left) and won 4 World Gold and 3 Silver Medals. More below left about kettlebells and this link for the sports stars.

<http://www.nyborg.dk/da/Nyheder/2018/December/Markering-af-DM-december-2018>

The kettlebell is a cast-iron or steel ball with a handle attached to the top, used to perform many types of exercises, including but not limited to ballistic exercises that combine cardiovascular, strength and flexibility training. They are also the primary equipment used in the weight lifting sport of kettlebell lifting.

### ANATOMY OF THE KETTLEBELL



## Neuchâtel hosts Euro "Floorball"

Neuchâtel, our Newcastle in Switzerland, has hosted a round of the Euro floorball tournament. It's a type of hockey with five players and a goalkeeper in each team, and growing in popularity. Called unihockey in Switzerland, the sport has 33000 registered players in the country, and Neuchâtel has been chosen to host the Womens World Floorball Championships in December 2019 !



## KARATE KING !

Tomáš Hermann of the TJ Karate Club of Nové Hradky, Czech Republic, has won yet more medals.



## SHINSHIRO RALLY

The 10th round of the All-Japan Rally (motoring) Championship took place in Shinshiro (Newcastle) and the Subaru WRX STI of Toshihiro Arai, and Naoya Tanaka won their sixth victory in the series this season. Over 50,000 people came to watch !

This time it's bronze medal in the BRM kumite in the European Grand Prix in which 850 contestants from 156 karate clubs and schools competed, from 21 European countries, but also from Morocco, Angola and Israel. In the Grand Prix of Bohemia he won gold in 80 kg kumite men and also silver in the team.

## Newcastle 500 draws in the crowds again

Fans flocked to Newcastle, Australia at the end of November for the second "Newcastle 500". Scott McLaughlin clinched his first Supercars crown in a finale to the 2018 championship. Supercars announced a crowd total of 162,248 for the three days of racing - and over two million watched on television.



The annual Shinshiro (Japan) marathon takes place on 20th January - we'll have the results next time.



Newcastle Falcons rugby union (back row) player Mark Wilson was chosen to play for England for the first time this autumn, and played in all four internationals against South Africa, Japan, New Zealand and Australia.



- and he was chosen by fans and commentators as the player of the series!



# COMMUNITY

## Hospice soon for Newcastle, Ontario



Newcastle Ontario is in Canada's Durham Region, and it needed a hospice... Durham Region is the biggest county in Ontario and one of the only counties without a hospice. A committee of four got together almost five years ago and soon Clarington will see the shovel in the ground to build a five bed hospice just outside Newcastle.

Over one million dollars has already been raised and charity events are being held to help make this happen. Two of the members of that original committee are very well known to Newcastles of the World (and were at our recent conference in Shinshiro, Japan) - **Willie Woo** and **Jill Richardson**.

Three events have been held recently to raise money. "Handbags for Hospice" was held in November to a sold-out crowd. A Greek/ Newfie Dinner at Massey House was also a sold-out event at The New Massey House Restaurant; Karen and Gus Batas were wonderful hosts. This event was so successful that "Newfie Kitchen Parties for Hospice" will be happening in various establishments in Newcastle over 2019. And a media event announced the raising of \$500,000 towards the Clarington Hospice. Kirk Kemp Algoma Orchards is one of the biggest donors. Donations have also been received from "100 Women Who Care" and "100 Men Who Care" in Clarington. To finish off the year there was a very generous donation of \$10,000 from St. Martin's Anglican Church in Courtice - the spirit of giving is alive and well with this congregation!



## NEUBURG VOLUNTEERS HELP REPAIR AND RESTORE

In Neuburg an der Donau, Germany there is a regular "repair café" where volunteer expert repairers will help restore broken, worn and defective items for the public - everything from bicycles, electrical and mechanical equipment, toys and furniture, broken ceramics for glueing, computers, tablets and cell phones can be repaired and any questions about how to use them answered. Smaller sewing jobs such as shortening a pair of trousers can be done with the guidance of a seamstress!

## Nové Zámky - A Generous Community

"Giving Tuesday" is the name of a traditional worldwide event, in which Slovakia took part for the first time this year. Generosity joined together businesses, families, individuals and non-profit organisations. Nové Zámky was fully involved in this event and people could donate durable food at 10 collection points - local people gave over 1200 kilos of food!



## Sculpture Outlines Women's Roles in War

A steel silhouette sculpture representing a local Newcastle-under-Lyme legend's journey towards pacifism and the women's suffrage movement has been unveiled at an award winning park in the lead-up to Remembrance Sunday. The window scene features author, feminist and war nurse Vera Brittain born in Newcastle in 1893 who helped wounded soldiers of the Western Front by volunteering as a nurse in London, Malta and France. Her best-selling memoir, Testament of Youth, describes the devastating impact of war on a generation. The steel sculpture, commissioned by the Council, is one of a series designed by internationally renowned sculptor Andy Edwards and made by PM Training, with help from engineering apprentices, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.



November 11<sup>th</sup> saw many other countries marking the centenary of the armistice that ended WW1 in remembrance for lost their lives. In **Nyborg, Denmark** there has also been recognition this year of seamen who played their part in the D Day landings in Normandy in World War II with a sculpture in the city's harbour. The idea was promoted by the Nyborg Marine Association. The last remaining sailor from the area of that time, 96 year old year-old Evald Brinck was among the speakers at the harbour for the unveiling of the sculpture.

The memorial "FORSAVN" by sculptor Lars Abrahamsen is an image of a ship descending but can also be perceived as a sail or as a large pivot needle on a compass foundation. On the deck side, four bronze plates are mounted with a memorandum and the names of the 35 seamen from Nyborg who died in war service. In total, more than 1,000 Danish sailors were lost during the war. "In Nyborg we are proud of our history, and here the harbour has always played an important role. So we are pleased to how have a landmark sculpture there to recognise our maritime history and the important role during World War II" said Nyborg Mayor Kenneth Muhs.



# TOURISM AND BUSINESS

A new Destination Management Organization (DMO) was established in Akhaltsikhe's province, Samtskhe-Javakheti, in November which aims to promote tourism development in the region and contribute to economic growth. The ceremony was held in the citadel of the Rabati fortress - Akhaltsike's castle - and attended by the US Ambassador to Georgia, representatives of Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Administration, local self-governments, NGOs and business spheres. The DMO was initiated and is supported by the Georgian National Tourism Administration and by USAID / ZRDA. Akhaltsikhe Mayor Zaza Melikidze is far right in the photo and next to him is Giorgi Kopadze, former Mayor and now member of the Georgian Parliament for the area.

## AKHALTSIKHE AND REGION HAVE NEW TOURISM AGENCY



## KEEPING THE CULTURAL TRADITIONS ALIVE IN JAUNPILS

Amatu Māja, the "House of Crafts" in Jaunpils, Latvia, has been awarded the accolade of the using the cultural sign "Latviskais Heritage". This is presented to those Latvian tourist entrepreneurs who preserve and maintain the country's cultural heritage and actively promote and use it as part of the tourism offer. The photo shows the ceremony.

## Lighting up everyone's Christmas

ORGEKO, a company based in Nové Zámky, our Newcastle in Slovakia, is one of the most important companies in Europe for the production of display lighting decors for Christmas interior and exterior lighting. 98% of the company's production has been realised abroad (European, Canadian, American market) and they have participated in creating Christmas lighting in many significant cities in Europe such as Paris, Monaco, London, Vienna, Madrid, Dublin, Prague and Rome.



## CIRCUS CELEBRATION PROJECT WINS TOURISM AWARD



Following a wonderful year of celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the first modern circus, invented by Newcastle-under-Lyme-born Philip Astley, the "Philip Astley Project" won Gold at the recent Staffordshire Tourism Awards. The project has been managed by Staffordshire University on behalf of a steering group of local heritage, arts, education and statutory organisations including the Borough Council and was set up to celebrate the life and legacy of Astley with a series of entertaining and educational activities during 2017 and 2018 – the 250th anniversary of modern circus. Other Newcastle-under-Lyme attractions picked up gold awards at this prestigious event, with Small Visitor Attraction of the Year going to Dorothy Clive Garden and the Business Tourism Award going to Keele University Events & Conferencing.

## NEWCASTLE AUSTRALIA IS 5-STAR !

A landmark deal will see Newcastle's current administrative headquarters transformed into a stunning five-star hotel to be known as the Kingsley, due to open by late 2020. Overlooking Civic Park, the harbour and Merewether from its upper floors, the Kingsley marks a historic moment in the City's revitalisation. Construction and fit out of the new hotel will begin as soon as City of Newcastle staff relocate to their new office new Newcastle West CBD.



Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes hailed the development as a turning point in Newcastle's history. "Great cities around the world provide truly great accommodation. Crystalbrook's decision to invest in Newcastle, when they could have invested anywhere in Australia, says so much about our city and how we are viewed by those living interstate and overseas. The location of the Kingsley will overnight revitalise the Civic (cultural) Precinct. Guests will be within 100 metres of the Civic Theatre, Newcastle Art Gallery, the Newcastle Museum and the Civic Playhouse, with a light rail station immediately across from it.



# MORE NEWS AND FEATURES

## STILL LOOKING GOOD AT 50

Fifty years ago **Newcastle upon Tyne Civic Centre** (town hall) was opened by King Olav of Norway, and it's still a magnificent building, currently undergoing internal refurbishment. Newcastle has a special link with Norway through historic trading links and because the city of Bergen is a twin city that generously provides a Christmas tree from Norway every year - erected in the grounds of the civic centre.

We know that Halloween is long past but we like this photo from **New Castle, Indiana, USA** which shows that it isn't just for kids ..... It's the annual costumed "Boo! Bingo" at Henry County Senior Center. Thanks to the New Castle Courier Times.



## CIVIC CHAMPIONS ARE ALSO 50

**Newcastle-under-Lyme Civic Society** which was formed in 1968 is celebrating 50 years. It's a diverse group of local people from all sorts of backgrounds brought together by a shared desire to protect, conserve and improve the character of the historic North Staffordshire market town (left).

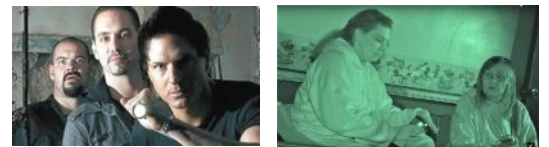
## GHOST HUNTERS HEAD FOR HILL VIEW MANOR

Hill View Manor in **New Castle, Pennsylvania USA** is one of the scariest, haunted houses in the state if not beyond. The daunting spirits that lurk the hallways and wards of this vast former asylum have a reputation that has led Hill View Manor to be featured on many paranormal television programmes. The spirits of the Manor like to make themselves known. Many visitors have reported seeing full blown apparitions, being pushed, having their hair and clothing pulled, and hearing disembodied voices cry out. Perhaps they are trying to tell their stories of the horror that they faced through neglect and incompetence? They say that the spirits of former patients and workers apparently have unfinished business and are ready to share their stories with the living.

Visitors on ghost hunts explore the most active areas of this very haunted hospital including the basement and the chapel - are the voices still praying for their loved ones? With reports and witnessed poltergeist activity such as items being thrown, chairs moved and a dark entity in the basement, the house has attracted many ghost hunters.

The Lawrence County Home for the Aged, also known as the poor house or poor farm, opened in 1926 to house the county's mentally ill, severely destitute, and elderly residents that didn't have any known family. It later changed into a nursing centre, finally closing in 2004.

Although it seems to sit quietly at the top of the grassy hill above Route 65, evidence of its history remains active.



## NEWCASTLE'S FORT AMIEL RECEIVES HISTORIC LOCOMOTIVE



An historic steam locomotive has been received at the Fort Amiel Museum in **Newcastle South Africa** by curator Louis Eksteen (right in picture) as part of a new development for displaying the areas's rich industrial history. The locomotive was donated by Arcelor Mittal's Newcastle Works, and takes pride of place in a replica railway station alongside the Fort Amiel grounds. Newcastle has played a major role in the development of the coal, steel and heavy engineering industries in South Africa.

The second exciting "Puppet Theatre" programme took place in November in **Neuburg an der Donau**, our Newcastle in Bavaria, Germany with performances over 3 days plus workshops. A highlight was puppet theatre company Cipolla from Bremen presenting the story of Michael Kohlhaas whose quest for justice turned him into a terrorist seeking revenge. Papp & Klapp presented the world premiere of "Frida, Freddi and the bike", the Thread players performed The Little Prince, and Figure Theater Salt & Pepper presented two productions.





# NEWCASTLE, SOUTH AFRICA RECOGNISED FOR HOUSING SUCCESS

Newcastle Municipality, South Africa, has proved itself once again at the Govan Mbeki Awards, hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements in Durban. Newcastle Mayor Cllr E.M Nkosi accompanied by his Human Settlements team took to stage to accept two awards for; The Best Informal Settlement upgrade (Siyahlala-la Settlement) and the Best Level 2 Accredited Municipality.



Mayor with his Human Settlements team showcasing the two accolades received at the Govan Mbeki Awards

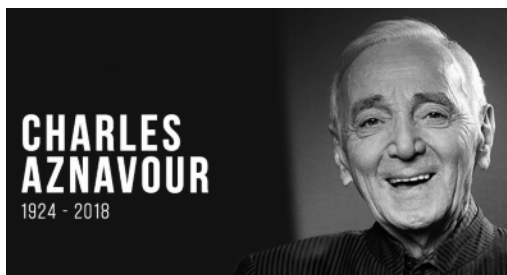
Portfolio Councillor for Development Planning & Human Settlements, Councillor Matthew Shunmugam explained that to get this kind of recognition and to go up against big players like eThekweni Municipality (Durban) and other bigger districts is a meritorious achievement.

Over 600 houses were completed in the Siyahlala-la Informal Settlement during 2017/18 and almost 500

beneficiaries took occupation of the houses. The Siyahlala-la Housing Project is a unique one as it has Coloured's, Indian's, Whites and African beneficiaries, which is a first of its kind in Newcastle.

## MALAYSIA MEETS JAPAN IN KOTA BHARU

The annual craft and arts festival of Kelantan State took place in Kota Bharu, our Newcastle in Malaysia last month. This year it had a special Japanese theme combining the best of Malay and Japanese culture and visited by the Consul General of Japan as a special guest. Traditional Malaysian highlights were silat (a martial art) and dance and kite-making displays, and from Japan the arts including drumming, origami and calligraphy.



Last month one of the streets in Akhaltsikhe, Georgia was named after the world-famous chansonnier Charles Aznavour. Akhaltsikhe Sacrebulo (council) had previously awarded Charles Aznavour the title of Honorary Citizen, and in 2012 he took part in the opening ceremony of the transformed Rabat Fortress in the town. Sadly, three months ago he died, but Akhaltsikhe wish to keep alive their connections with the great singer whose father was born in Akhaltsikhe and whose Armenian roots were always remembered.



The UK's Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson (left in photo, with Lord Mayor David Down) has announced that one of the Royal Navy's new Type 26 frigates (war ships) will be named HMS Newcastle, which will become the ninth ship to carry the name and the connection of the Royal Navy with Newcastle upon Tyne and the River Tyne.



Accompanied by his wife Mari. Art Riddle, Mayor of New Castle Colorado USA was a welcome visitor to Neuburg an der Donau recently, and met the Oberbürgermeister Dr. Bernhard Gmehling (right in picture) and our Newcastles of the World champion former councillor Walter Friemel. Last year Mayor Riddle visited Newcastle upon Tyne and met the Lord mayor - we welcome these links.

**ABOUT NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD:** In 1998 the Mayor of Shinshiro in Japan took the initiative to invite representatives of seven Newcastles to his city. They have continued to meet every two years – in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in 2000, USA (Indiana and Pennsylvania) in 2002, South Africa 2004 & 2010, Newcastle-under-Lyme (UK) in 2006, Neuburg an der Donau, Germany in 2008, Newcastle upon Tyne (UK) in 2012, Nove Hradý Czech Republic (2014), Newcastle Ontario, Canada (2016) and Shinshiro in 2018. The aim of the Newcastles Alliance is to foster friendship and collaboration, and to share and enjoy each others' heritage and culture. Each gathering takes one or more discussion themes to ensure practical, usable outcomes, also involving our young people.

