

ANOTHER MEMORABLE MIMOSA FESTIVAL IN HERCEG NOVI

The 55th edition of the famous Mimosa Festival in **Herceg Novi**, our Newcastle in Montenegro, again drew huge crowds of locals and visitors, celebrating the yellow flower that blooms in what is Europe's earliest springtime.

This is the biggest winter tourist and promotional event in the entire country and featured a very large programme of music, dance, sport, the famous local marching majorettes, masquerade balls and the traditional mimosa, fish and wine festival.



A carnival procession with 600 participants and a huge open-air concert concluded another memorable festival.

TAKING THE PLUNGE !

The annual Danube swimming extravaganza in **Neuburg an der Donau**, our "Newcastle" in Bavaria, Germany, is Europe's biggest winter swimming event. This year it attracted over 1800 participants, including Neuburg Mayor Bernhard Gmehling, despite difficult conditions. The river current was fast, the water level exceptionally high

and the embankment very muddy. The course was reduced in length and limits were placed on the size of the display crafts that the swimmers could bring - but it was still a great spectacle! After a cup of hot chicken soup and the presentation of trophies, many of the swimmers stayed on and enjoyed the fancy dress ball in the evening until the early morning hours.



70 years of Masopust in Nové Hradý!

"Masopust" is the annual (noisy and colourful) festival at this time of year in **Nové Hradý**, our "Newcastle" in South Bohemia in the Czech Republic. The festival this year was the 70th and was bigger than ever. The timing of the festival is associated with both the driving out of winter and the feasting that precedes the time of fasting and abstinence of Lent.

Here is Mayor Vladimír Hokr launching the 70th anniversary festivities - and see the next page for more photos of this year's event.



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Celebrating Masopust in Nové Hradky



ABOUT NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD

There are more than 100 different “Newcastles” or “New Castles” around the globe, in many different countries and different languages. It was the mayor of one of them, in Shinshiro, Japan, who took the initiative to bring the

Newcastles together via the Newcastles of the World summit in 1998. Subsequent gatherings were held in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in 2000, USA (New Castles of Indiana & Pennsylvania) 2002, Newcastle South Africa 2004 and 2010, UK 2006 (Newcastle-under-Lyme) & 2012 (Newcastle upon Tyne), Germany (Neuburg an de Donau) in 2008, Nové Hradky (Czech Republic) in 2014, Newcastle, Ontario, Canada in 2016 and in Shinshiro again in 2018. In 2023 our conferences resumed as we returned to Nové Hradky who hosted it with the support of

Nové Zámky (Slovakia). Our next conference will be held in Jaunpils, Latvia in 2025. Our aim is to foster individual, group and civic friendships, with practical links through culture, education, business and tourism.

New Castle Mayor



PEOPLE

NEW MAYOR TAKES HIS PLACE

At his third attempt at election, Mark Elisco has now become Mayor of **New Castle, Pennsylvania, USA**. The former councilman returned to City Hall and was sworn in as Mayor in January. The other members of the Council - have also been sworn in.

They are Deputy Mayor Eric Ritter and Councilmen Robert Razzano, Bryan Cameron, Terry Rodgers and David Ward.



FAREWELL FROM NYBORG TO QUEEN MARGRETHE



Denmark has a new King, Frederik X, after the unexpected abdication announcement on New Year's Eve of the country's longest-reigning monarch Queen Margrethe II.

Nyborg ("Newcastle") has paid tribute to the former Queen by recalling her visits to the city over her 52 years as monarch - she first came in 1957 as the 17 year old crown princess. This photo is from the most recent visit in 2019 (in the carriage with Mayor Kenneth Muhs) which we covered in our newsletter at the time. Denmark's monarchy traces its origins to 10th-century Viking king Gorm the Old, making it the oldest in Europe and one of the oldest in the world.

NEWCASTLE'S CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

Professor Nathan Bartlett from the Hunter Medical Research Institute's Infection Research Programme and Emeritus Professor Julie Byles have been named as Citizen and Senior Citizen of the Year for 2024 in **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia**. The researchers were honoured at an award ceremony held in January. Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said Professor Bartlett's selection as Citizen of the Year recognises his pioneering medical research and ongoing commitment to improving health outcomes for others.



She said: "He has been particularly associated with educating the community and industry bodies such as the National Asthma Council to better understand and cope with COVID-19 and respiratory viruses, and dedicates his time to teaching and mentoring the next generation of medical professionals and biomedical researchers".

Professor Byles is the president of the Hunter Ageing Alliance that is devoted to advocating for the needs of people aged over 60 in Newcastle. Prior to her retirement from academia in 2023, Professor Byles spent 20 years as the Co-Director of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health.



PROFESSOR HONOURED

On February 19th, the city of **Neuchâtel** held a reception and presentation of the City's medal of honour to archaeologist Professor Denis Knoepfler. Working with the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, he made a major discovery of the temple of the Goddess of Artemis on the island of Evia, Greece, the result of a career spanning almost 50 years.



Mr Knoepfler (*left in photo*) was born in Neuchâtel before entering the city's university. He still lives in the city and teaches at the university where he is an honorary professor. The discovery by his team was made several years ago, but has just been the subject of a documentary film recounting the adventure.

PEOPLE

Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal's Ben Greyling, a passionate advocate of South African history, is dedicated to ensuring that the country's rich and dynamic past remains alive and accessible to future generations. Greyling, along with fellow amateur radio enthusiasts and history lovers in the group called Heritage on the Air (HOTA), is actively engaged in locating and documenting historical sites across the country.



HOTA focuses on identifying sites that are 75 years or older, such as grave sites associated with significant events like the Anglo-Boer War. Armed with radio equipment, the group ventures into various regions, plotting these sites and compiling a comprehensive database.

Greyling emphasises the importance of this endeavour, as many children today have limited knowledge of South African history. His primary objective is to identify historical landmarks in the Newcastle area, while his fellow history enthusiast, Andre Rheeder, focuses on monitoring sites in nearby Vryheid. In Northern KwaZulu-Natal, they have already identified several noteworthy sites, including the Fort Amiel, Amajuba Mountain, Fort Mistake, Laingsnek, Schuinshoogte and an area in Aviary Hill where horses were exhibited during the Anglo-Boer War period.

They now seek the assistance of local farmers and other history enthusiasts to expand their search.

Sue Wilson, from Newcastle upon Tyne, has been part of the British support for Newcastles of the World from the organisation's earliest days. In fact she's been essential to the continued development of our organisation.

Recently, whilst on a holiday to Costa Rico, Sue met a member of her travel group who not only is from another New Castle but is on our newsletter mailing list and also knows all about us!

Bruce Dalleo is from New Castle, Delaware in the USA - a good basis for a new friendship! Sue is on the left of this photo and Bruce on the right.

We take this opportunity to share some images of Bruce's hone New Castle, a town of around 5000 people that was originally settled by the Dutch in 1651 and became an important centre of government and a town of architectural distinction. New Castle's Historic District is one of the most well-preserved communities in the United States, with more than 600 historic structures spanning four centuries of architecture.



FAREWELL TO EDDIE, FORMER MAYOR AND NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD ALLIANCE STALWART

We missed the opportunity in our last newsletter to pay tribute to former Newcastle-under-Lyme Mayor and Borough Council leader Eddie Boden who died last year at the age of 83. But to readers who attended some of the earlier conferences of Newcastles of the World, Eddie will be remembered as a champion of our alliance and a regular conference attendee himself. He represented Newcastle-under-Lyme at the very first summit in Shinshiro, Japan in 1998.

Eddie was also elected to Staffordshire County Council in 1993, where he took up the role of chairman of the authority from 2003 to 2005. He was seen by party members as a father figure and is spoken of fondly by those who served alongside him at the council. As leader of the Borough council, mayor and chairman of the county council, Eddie always worked tirelessly to ensure that the people of Newcastle received the investment and services they deserved.



TOURISM AND BUSINESS

Four Stars for the Danube Cycleway

“Our Danube cycleway is one of the most beautiful bicycle rides“ said **Neuburg an der Donau** Mayor Dr Bernhard Gmehling (*second right in photo*) at a ceremony of the Tourist Fair in Stuttgart in January, where the 4-star certificate was presented to him by the “Association German Danube“.



About 50,000 cyclists use the Danube Cycleway each year, stretching from Donaueschingen (in the west) to Passau in the east of Bavaria. A count carried out in Neuburg in 2023 showed that about 13,000 cyclists reached Neuburg on their way along the Danube. Mayor Gmehling chairs the German Danube Tourism Association.

Shinshiro tea wins awards at British Tea Fair!



Two Teas of Suzuki Seicha of **Shinshiro** have won “Highly Commended” Awards at THE LEAFIES 2023 International Tea Academy Awards in London.

Mr. Katsuya Suzuki from Suzuki Seicha visited Shinshiro Mayor Hiroyuki Shimoe at City Hall and served his winning teas - Hojicha (a premium roasted green tea) and Shirocha (a white tea).

LEAFIES, launched by “the UK Tea Academy” in collaboration with upmarket store Fortnum and Mason, is one of world’s biggest tea competitions.

A total of 320 teas were entered from around the world to be evaluated for the year 2023. The LEAFIES are the first and only dedicated tea awards in the UK and aim to promote excellence in the tea industry and foster international collaboration between producers and buyers.



The tourism campaign “Visit Kelantan 2024” was launched at the end of February in the state capital of **Kota Bharu**, our Newcastle in Malaysia. A huge range of attractions and events await tourists during the year.

NEW TOURISM DRIVE



JAUNPILS SHOWS ITS ATTRACTIONS

Jaunpils, our Newcastle in Latvia, was represented last month at Kipsala International Exhibition Centre in Riga (the largest specialised exhibition complex in the Baltic countries) at the three day Balttour 2024 tourism event. Over 300 companies from 34 countries were present and over 21,000 people attended the exhibition, of whom over 4000 were tourism professionals. Jaunpils’ presentation was by castle manager Kristīne Liepiņa (*far right*) and castle guides - all in medieval costume of course!



TYNE CRUISING SEASON

The cruise season is well under way from the River Tyne in **Newcastle** where the sight of Fred Olson ships is common. Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines is a UK-based, Norwegian-owned cruise shipping line. Olsen's cruises from Newcastle are a gateway to a variety of destinations and memorable experiences across Europe, from mini-cruises to the

Netherlands, to discovering Scandinavia and Northern Europe in search of spectacular highland and fjordland scenes on cruises to Norway, Iceland or the Baltic, or cruising south to the Canary Islands or Portugal.



The **Akhaltshikhe** Municipality, Republic of Georgia, has received 18 new buses, all equipped with the latest facilities. The buses have been added to the present fleet to make the transport facilities among the best in the country.

ARTS AND CULTURE

TAKING GEORGIAN CULTURE TO THE NETHERLANDS

During March, our good friend Zaza Tamarashvili (third right in the photo), Head of Culture at the municipality of Akhaltsikhe (Newcastle in the Republic of Georgia) has been part of the group Dzmano on a singing tour in the Netherlands.

Dzmano - Concert polyfone zang

Dzmano zingt prachtige traditionele liederen over de natuur, liefde, strijd en kerkliederen. Ze begeelden zichzelf daarbij op de panduri (Georgisch snaarinstrument).

De polyfone of meerstemmige Georgische zang is eeuwenoud en staat op de wereld erfgoedlijst.

Het kwartet maakt deel uit van het koor Mskheta in Akhalsikhe in Georgië.

Dzmano represent the polyphonic Georgian singing culture which is centuries old and is on the World Heritage List. There are performances and workshops during the tour. The quartet Dzmano is in the Netherlands for the third time, performing traditional vocal works about love, nature, struggle and religious songs. The songs are partly performed a cappella or accompanied on the panduri or guitar.

Zaza gave a demonstration of the singing style to visiting young people from Newcastle, South Africa and Newcastle upon Tyne, England during their visit to perform in Akhaltsikhe Castle in 2017.

The Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne has been chosen as the new 'Number 10 Museum in Residence' in partnership with the UK Government Art Collection. Nine artworks from the Laing are on display for one year at the residence of the Prime Minister, Number 10 Downing Street in London. They will be seen by leaders and important guests from around the world, exposing a new audience to the arts and heritage of the North East. The chosen artworks represent the city of Newcastle and the wider North East region of England. Five of the works capture Newcastle's unique cityscape and point to the city's industrial past, while the other four reflect the diverse art scene of the North East. The artworks chosen are either by artists based in the North East or those who responded to the landmarks and landscapes of the region through their art. Some of them are shown on this montage photo.



The fortieth edition of the celebrated dance competition, Novohradská číše, took place on 9th March. Over 140 dance couples from all over the Czech Republic took part to compete in both standard and Latin American dances. **Nové Hradky's** is one of the ten events of the national Dance League.

"The competition was founded by my mother" said Nové Hradky Mayor Vladimír Hokr, adding that couples particularly like to come to this town on the Austrian border "because the audience applauds them from the morning - this is not at all common in other competitions. The finals, which take place during the gala evening, are absolutely packed. Every year we have an excess demand for tickets. For the gala evening, we really need a hall twice as big"



The city gallery "Josip Bepo Benković" opened its doors in January for the 57th **Herceg Novi Winter Salon**, the oldest art event in the region. The exhibition is showcasing works of 39 artists from Montenegro and the wider Balkan area.

THE FATHER OF MODERN CIRCUS

In March, **Newcastle-under-Lyme** in England celebrated the opening of the 'Philip Astley Centre'. Born in the town in 1742, Philip Astley invented the modern circus in 1768. Astley developed the first 42 feet (13 Metres) diameter circus ring – which is the standard still used today all over the world – and also introduced rope walkers, acrobats and clowns alongside his equestrian shows.



Circus traces its heritage to Astley's Amphitheatre, a riding school that Astley founded following the success of trick-riding displays given by him and his wife Patty Jones.



At the age of nine, he apprenticed with his father, but Astley's dream was to work with horses, so he joined the Fifteenth Light Dragoons when he was 17, later becoming a sergeant major. His service in the Seven Years' War brought him into contact with professional trainers and riders. Astley himself was a brilliant rider. He built 19 amphitheatres across the UK and in Paris.

A previously empty and derelict property was repurposed and transformed by Philip Astley Projects company, working alongside Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Newcastle Town Deal and the Levelling Up Fund. The creation of the Philip Astley Centre has breathed fresh life into the town centre with this new visitors centre. The opening event of the centre reflected culture, creativity, and community, with exhibitions, film shows, talks, puppetry classes, circus workshops, and storytelling activities. See <https://www.facebook.com/PhilipAstleyProjects/videos/361923632000175/>



The Puppet Theatre in **Akhaltzikhe**, our Newcastle in the Republic of Georgia, is one of the oldest and best in the country and its building has just been refurbished. The Puppet Theatre's significance has been recognised through a new Memorandum of Cooperation between the municipality and the Association of Professional State Puppet Theatres of Georgia. Municipality Mayor, Irakli Lazarashvili (left) is pictured with Nikoloz Sabashvili, artistic director of the Association.



Tea Tsulukiani the Georgian Minister of Culture and Sports opened the renovated Puppet Theatre on 14 March - she is on the right of the photo.



The Montenegro Minister of Culture and Media, Tamara Vujović, and the President of the Municipality of **Herceg Novi**, Stevan Katic, have signed a memorandum of cooperation for the implementation of the "SA Creativity" project. This envisages the complete revitalisation of the Španjola fortress in the city by 2027 and the establishment of an international creative centre. Under the Interreg programme *South Adriatic*, the goal is to protect cultural property from deterioration by establishing new and sustainable functions.



The building will have capacity for residential stays of artists, creative entrepreneurs, and the development of creative industries, especially in the field of multimedia art, applied sculpture, graphics and painting. The building will have equipped exhibition, presentation and accommodation units, office space, a garden and a summer stage, taking advantage of the wonderful views from this, the highest of Herceg Novi's three castles.



THE ROYAL "BLUE FESTIVAL" IN NYBORG

It was a sight out of the ordinary that filled the streets of Nyborg, Denmark on a Saturday morning in February. Two hundred guards assembled and marched through the city for the Royal Life Guard's annual "Blue Festival". The march marks the time that the soldiers have completed the first period of their training and are ready to put on their uniforms. At the town hall square, Mayor Kenneth Muhs spoke about about the guards' historical connection to Nyborg, where there is a local guards' association.

Every year, the Blue Festival is celebrated in a provincial Danish town. The Royal Guard, ("Den Kongelige Livgarde") has a rich history. The guard was founded in 1658 by King Frederik III., who didn't believe that the peace treaty of Roskilde with Sweden would last, and thus felt in need of a guard. The Royal Guard today serves two purposes: it is an infantry combat unit and also a ceremonial unit that guards the royal family and their castles.

New Castle's County celebrates its 175th birthday

New Castle is the county seat of Lawrence County, in Pennsylvania USA and is at the heart of the county's 175th birthday celebration this year. And it's only fitting that it has a logo and a flag to commemorate the year. The county commissioners have approved an official logo and a flag designed by artist Ian D. Baker from Little Beaver Township in the New Castle metro area.



The flag and logo each have 27 stars, one for each municipality in the county and 10 stars commemorating the existing 10 boroughs, Ian said. One star is the City of New Castle and 16 others represent the number of townships within the county.

The slogan, "Don't give up the ship," are the last words of Captain James Lawrence during the from the 1812 Battle of Lake Erie, when his ship, the USS Chesapeake, was captured.

When the new county in this part of Pennsylvania was formed in 1849, it was decided to name it after the heroic Captain Lawrence.

The official birthday is March 20. The Lawrence County Courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places. Today you can view James Lawrence and his ship's flag in the U.S. Naval Academy Museum in Annapolis, MD.



KOTA BHARU AIRPORT UPGRADE ON TRACK

At the end of February, the chairman and members of Kota Bharu (Malaysia) Municipal Council visited Sultan Ismail Petra Airport to inspect the major construction works that have been under way. The expectation is that the upgraded airport will be a catalyst for the development of the State of Kelantan and help boost the *Visit Kelantan 2024* tourism programme.

The Newcastle Winter festival has been running for the last 28 years and is the biggest festival in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In 2024 it will take place over 25-27 April, and will again expect to attract over 25,000 people to enjoy the best artists in the country, the funfair and over 250 exhibitors. The festival is a non-profit organisation, with profits going back to local community projects. Over 6000 kids attend free and also receive an educational programme about road safety, drugs and alcohol abuse. The festival is a huge boost to the local economy, attracting visitors from far afield as well as locally.



Community connection and lifelong learning has been at the heart of Newcastle Australia's annual festival celebrating seniors, part of the state-wide New South Wales Seniors' Festival. With the theme 'Reach Beyond', forty events and activities were organised across the city from 11 -24 March 2024 delivered by City of Newcastle and a range of community organisations.

City facilities hosted a range of events including the flagship comedy gala, Seniors Expo at City Hall and a travel writing workshop. Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said "The Seniors Committee have created a wonderful programme featuring a range of activities presented by City of Newcastle and a diverse mix of community groups," .

NEUCHÂTEL MARKS REPUBLIC DAY

March 1st is a special day Neuchâtel, our Newcastle in Switzerland, marking the creation of the Republic of Neuchâtel in 1848 within the Swiss Confederation. This followed a peaceful revolution which is commemorated in the Canton every year with a grand march – almost 2000 people took part this time.



The marchers started outside the city from Le Locle, La Chaux-de-Fonds and Môtiers, all arriving at the Château de Neuchâtel. Mauro Moruzzi, President of the Communal Council of Neuchâtel fired the cannon that set off the march in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia has been developing its links with Japan. Nihon University has invested more than \$40 million Australian dollars (around 25 million euros/US dollars) into restoring the historic 1890s Newcastle NSW Courthouse and has signed a



collaboration agreement with the University of Newcastle, Australia, further strengthening the relationship between the City and Japan.

Students from Japan have just spent several weeks in Newcastle as they continue their studies, improve their

English language skills and collaborate with students from the University of Newcastle. The photo is of the students visiting Newcastle beach, with Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes (centre), and (to her right in the photo) Gary Foster, Chair of International Newcastle, who arranged a tour of the magnificent Newcastle coastline for the students. Gary is also a great champion of Newcastle of the World.



Welcome visitors to Newcastle upon Tyne in February were Ilinca Schneller and Grégory Otter from Neuchâtel, our Newcastle in Switzerland. Here they are with host Sue Wilson on one of the bridges over the River Tyne and with the famous statue, The Angel of the North, also at the civic centre visiting Lord Mayor Veronica Dunn and former Lord Mayor Habib Rahman, and in the council chamber.



Ilinca and Gregory are members of the youth parliament of Ville de Neuchâtel and attended the Newcastle of the World conference last November in the Czech Republic



New Castle, Indiana, USA is gearing up for the Solar Eclipse 2024! New Castle is in the direct path of total eclipse on Monday, April 8th at 3:06pm. Mayor Greg York is getting ready, as the photo shows!

There are lots of activities planned for the weekend approaching the Monday, with concerts and a carnival.



SWITZERLAND AND JAPAN - FRIENDS THROUGH SHINSHIRO AND NEUCHÂTEL



Shinshiro, being a friendship city of **Neuchâtel**, Switzerland, was invited to a reception at the Embassy of Switzerland in Tokyo in February to celebrate the 160th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Japan.

Mayor Hiroyuki Shimoe attended and gave Shinshiro's congratulations to the Swiss Ambassador Mr. Andreas Baum. After hearing that the mayor came from Shinshiro, the Ambassador said "Neuchâtel! I've been told about your city from Mr. Didier Burkhalter!" with a big smile. Mr Burkhalter is a former President of the Swiss Federation and was Mayor of Neuchâtel several times.

Neuburg's Campus Development is a mix of historic and modern buildings

Plans for the expansion and redevelopment OF the academic campus at **Neuburg an der Donau**, Germany have been approved by councillors. After the modular building was inaugurated last summer in record construction time, the expansion of the campus is now entering the next round. All historic red-brick buildings of the former Lassigny Barracks will be preserved and re-developed, providing room for 1200 students. These five historic buildings will accommodate offices for the professors, rooms for meetings, a nursery and part of the library. The new buildings will offer space for lecture halls, laboratories, venues, a canteen and conference rooms. Sustainability plays an important role in the expansion of the campus. The trees and green spaces will be preserved and photovoltaic panels will be installed on all the roofs. As the Campus itself will be a car-free area an underground car park will provide ample parking space. At the moment 200 students are enrolled at the campus, 50 per cent coming from abroad.



Neuburg's Lord Mayor Dr. Bernhard Gmehling (pictured on the left of the photo with project team members) said "We are very pleased that we are consistently pursuing the growth of the THI Campus Neuburg and that the overall offer will thus become more attractive. Ever better conditions for students make the young campus and Neuburg an der Donau even more appealing as a place to study. We are a proud university town and look forward to welcoming many more young people as well as continued good cooperation with the Ingolstadt University of Applied Sciences."

SHOWCASING NEUCHÂTEL'S WATCHMAKING HERITAGE

The council of **Neuchâtel** has established a room in the City Hall to highlight the city's watchmaking heritage. This has been occasioned because the European Space Agency (ESA) offered two "atomic clocks" equipping the Galileo positioning satellites (like the American GPS). These atomic clocks were designed and manufactured in Neuchâtel.

The City Council took the opportunity of this gift to redesign the Salle des pas perdus of the City Hall, which already housed the 19th-century Hipp clock and the innovative Isospring clock at EPFL.

The Houriet clock, which is more than 200 years old, has also been moved inside the City Hall to join this exhibition space that has been open to the public intermittently.



This remodelled space is a testament to the tradition of excellence, research and innovation in the city of Neuchâtel. The Salle des pas perdus now has its own name: the Salle des horloges. The new space was inaugurated at an event attended by senior officials of the ESA, politicians of the City and the Canton, and Federal Councilor Guy Parmelin, in charge of the Federal Department of the Economy, of training and of research. Find out more on www.neuchatelville.ch/salle-des-horloges

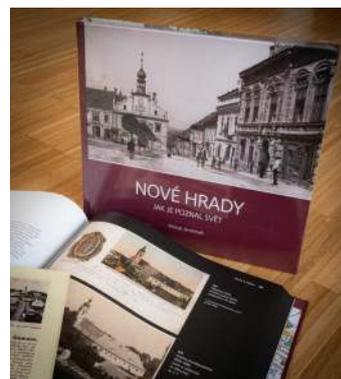
A BIG SPLASH !

A New Year highlight in our **Newcastle in Ontario, Canada** is the annual Polar Bear Swim for charity. Almost 300 swimmers braved the waters of Lake Ontario and raised around 25,000 Canadian dollars (17,000 Euros) this year - and it's all to help support autistic adults in the name of the late Hollylynn Towie and the charity *Autism Home Base*.



After several years of continuous writing and of collecting old postcards of **Nové Hradý** (Czech Republic) and surroundings, a new book about the town has been published. Congratulations to editor/author Michal Jarolimek who we first met as a delegate to our 2012 Newcastles of the World conference in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The Latvian Union of Municipalities national training seminar "Strengthening principles of good governance in municipalities" took place in **Jaunpils** in February and was addressed by our friend and former President of Jaunpils County, Ligita Gintere.



All box office records were broken at the famous Civic Theatre in **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia** for the 50th anniversary tour production of the iconic musical *The Rocky Horror Show*. The Australian tour of the new three-week production premiered in Newcastle, with Australia's international superstar singer/actor Jason Donovan in the role of Frank N Furter.

Theatre-goers from every state in Australia travelled to Newcastle to experience one of the world's most popular rock and roll musicals. It's the most successful production ever staged at the Civic Theatre, delivering a ripple effect to accommodation providers, local businesses and the wider visitor economy. Show producer Sir Howard Panter said "With more than 30,000 tickets sold and half the audience coming to the Civic Theatre for the very first time, we are thrilled with the start of our tour."



The Chinese New Year was celebrated in several of our Newcastles at the beginning of February, marking the Year of the Dragon, with entertainment, food and the traditional lion dance. *Left* - the centre of **Neuchâtel, Switzerland** and - *right* - **Newcastle upon Tyne**, which has one of the UK's nine official *Chinatown* areas.



The **New Castle (Indiana) Broad Street Cruise-In** takes place on the first Saturday of each month, starting in April and runs through to October. 2024 is the tenth anniversary year of the cruise-in, which showcases classic cars of past times.

New Castle was the home of the famous Maxwell cars, with one of its first production plants - later bought and operated by Chrysler.

At one time the Chrysler plant in New Castle employed 6700 people, and it remained on the same site (the same building) as the original Maxwell factory for the whole of the 20th century. No wonder the city of New Castle holds to its industrial heritage by celebrating these vintage cars.

New Castle Broad Street Cruise In 10th Anniversary 2024 SCHEDULE

CRUISE-IN'S KICK OFF AT 5PM UNTIL 9PM
 (SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN VIEW OF THE WEATHER)
 BY CAR OR BY BUS AT ANYTIME - ADVANCE TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE
 CONTACT THE NEWCASTLE CHRYSLER CLUB FOR MORE INFO
 CRUISE-IN'S WILL BE FREE SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH

TO BE A SPONSOR PLEASE CONTACT JEFF CROSS AT 765-591-5892 OR J.CROSS@CHRYSLERMETRO.NET

SATURDAY, APRIL 6TH - OPEN FEATURE
SATURDAY, MAY 4TH - OPEN FEATURE
SATURDAY, JUNE 1ST - MOTORCYCLE NIGHT
SATURDAY, JULY 6TH - VETERANS NIGHT
SATURDAY, AUGUST 3RD - KIDS NIGHT
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH - OPEN FEATURE
OCTOBER 5TH - CLUB NIGHT

YOUTH

As part of an Erasmus+ project, youth council members from **Nové Zámky**, Slovakia, gained additional experience at the offices of the Nitra self-governing region.

A simulated meeting of the council was prepared by the Chairman of the Nitra Autonomous Region, Branislav Becík and his team.



It was carried out in the way a real regional council works - with voting machines by name, and following the exact agenda that the young people had available, together with materials provided a week in advance.

The gathering may pave the way for the establishment of a regional youth parliament.

The young mayor of **Nyborg** Municipality, Alfred Nørregaard Gotthardsen, has carried out a days's internship with municipal mayor Kenneth Muhs. It began at the mayor's office, where Kenneth introduced Alfred to the role of Mayor and afterwards showed him around the city hall in Nyborg.



During the day, the young mayor participated in a political meeting and held conversations with two of the municipality's directors about how the logistics of a municipality works. For the rest of the week Alfred experienced the municipal machine from the inside, shadowing the mayor and visiting several departments, including Technology, Environment & Business and Children & Schools.

Our **Newcastle in South Africa** has just hosted the biggest-ever youth career expo in Northern KwaZulu-Natal Province, providing young people with a huge variety of career options.

"The focus is to encourage our youth to dream big, with no limitations" said Mayor Xolani Dube.



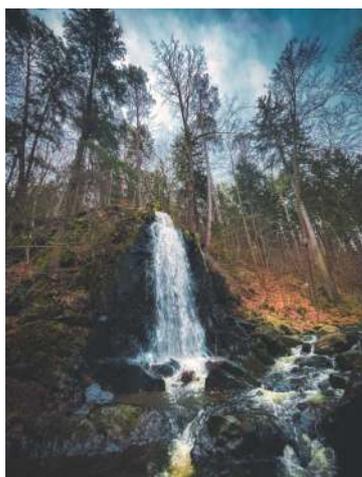
Mayor Dube has also recognised 17 year-old Dia Singh from Curro's St. Dominics School in Newcastle, who has become one of the top achievers in the country in the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) matric results. She excelled with top scores in a huge diversity of subjects from Mathematics and Life Sciences to English and Afrikaans, and also including Accounting and Business Studies.

Her innovative spirit was previously recognised globally when she received the first runner-up award at the HP Steam International Expo in Dubai for her PIP System invention in 2022 (for plastic reduction and disposal) and was then placed second runner-up at the Taiwan International Science Fair in 2023.

Congratulations to Ketija Krastiņa of **Jaunpils**, our "Newcastle" in Latvia, - first prize winner in the winter photographic competition organised by Newcastles of the World youth, with this photo (*right*) of the wonderful medieval castle of Jaunpils.



Also recognised (*left*) was a photograph by Jakub Šnejda of **Nové Hradky**, in the Czech Republic of the waterfall in the Theresa Valley just outside the town.



Rina Watanabe's fine photograph of the temple in **Shinshiro**, Japan (*left*) was also recognised in the competition.

Seventeen-year-old volunteer Olivia Hughes was named the 2024 Young Citizen of the Year for **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia** for her selfless charity work and fundraising efforts. As a dedicated member of Newcastle's Surf Life Saving Club since the age of five, Olivia teaches beach safety to children with disabilities and regularly volunteers with sporting events such as triathlons and surf competitions. After losing a childhood friend to cancer at age 10, she also began holding monthly craft sessions for sick children and their families at Ronald McDonald House and is a passionate fundraiser for charities including Dr Chris O'Brien Lifehouse and SurfAid's *Make a Wave* challenge.



The latest **Newcastle-under-Lyme** Music, Speech and Drama festival took place on 15/16 March. It's one of Britain's biggest such youth festivals, an opportunity for amateur competitors to perform in public and receive advice from experienced professional adjudicators.

It's open to anyone, and competitors receive an adjudication, with winner receiving a trophy. The festival offers a wide range of different music and speech classes.



Congratulations to the **New Castle (Indiana, USA)** Red Hot Blues Show Choir on their first place finishes, sweeping all musical categories in the latest East Indiana school showcase event. They're undoubtedly East Central Indiana's premier show choir. The New Castle schools are exceptionally achievers in music, dance and theatre. Read more here - <https://www.nccsc.k12.in.us/about/your-best-choice/performing-arts/>

Shinshiro City, our Newcastle in Japan, not only has a vibrant youth parliament which is now approaching its tenth year, but has its own regular magazine created by and for young people, packed with news, information and advice for young people. The latest edition is just out - it includes interviews with young people who attended the Newcastle Alliance meeting. Shinshiro is now recruiting for the membership to the new youth assembly. Read more about its youth parliament here -



<https://www.city.shinshiro.lg.jp/shisei/machidukuri/wakamono-gikai/wakamonogikai9.html>

In February, **Nové Hradý** hosted a South Bohemian youth chess competition with over 250 children taking part.

It's not often that children's play areas can also reflect and promote the heritage of their location, but a play area in **Nové Zámky**, our Newcastle in Slovakia, does just that.

The second ("new) castle, after which the city takes its name, was built between 1573 and 1580 and was one of the most significant Renaissance fortresses in Europe, Its floor plan was hexagonal, with a perpendicular street network and a central space in its interior, and with six outer bastions. Other than a small section, the fortress was demolished by Hapsburg Emperor Charles V in 1724 to prevent insurrections that might use the castle as a base. However, its floor plan can be found in the coat of arms of the city - and in an interactive play zone in the city, built to the pattern of the old fortress.



It's one of nine in Europe developed by CULTPLAY who provide unique, unusual and educational learning and play experiences for children, with EU and Interreg funding.



Clarington Mayor Adrian Foster joined fellow council members and other dignitaries at the **Newcastle (Canada) Memorial Arena** following its renovation. One of the most recognisable buildings in Newcastle, this historic arena building was officially opened as an indoor natural ice rink in 1951.



The project included replacing the rink floor and refrigerated ice pad, a new refrigeration system, all new rink boards, penalty boxes and benches, new tempered glass at 6-foot height for added safety, new safety netting, a fully accessible washroom in the lobby and two fully accessible change rooms. The renovation has expanded the arena by 1,500 square feet, and is expected to extend the service life of the facility by up to 30 years.

Hometown Hockey hero Tara Watchorn, a Newcastle resident, first laced up her hockey skates in this building at the age of four - she became an Olympic gold medallist in 2014 as a member of the successful Canadian ice hockey team. "It's exciting to think that our next hometown Olympic athlete may learn to skate right here on this new ice surface," said the Mayor (in the centre of the photo above). The municipality is currently undergoing a Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan review, which will guide future recreation projects and investments.



Awards to the best athletes and young talents, sports workers and collectives for the year 2023 in **Herceg Novi**, Montenegro were presented at the "Champion's Night" ceremony recently in the Park Hall (*see left*).

Shinshiro Rally bows out



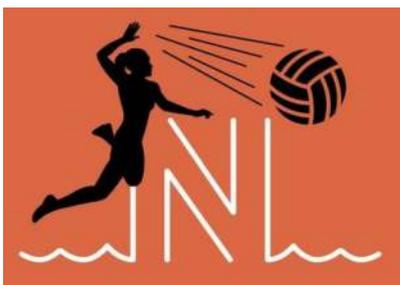
On 11 February, "the **Shinshiro Rally Grand Thanks Festival**" was held. It marked the end of the Shinshiro Rally, which had been running for 20 years since 2004 until 2023 as part of the national Japan Rally.

The event was held at Sakurabuchi Park in Shinshiro City and featured exhibition booths of car dealers, a talk show by Toyota Corporation Chairman Akio Toyoda, and a driving demonstration. Over 3,000 people attended.



Nicknamed "The Sniper", Amiran Gogoladze, from **Akhaltikhe**, (our Newcastle in the Republic of Georgia) has been named as one of the top three breakthrough fighters of 2023 in Mixed Martial Arts in Europe.

On March 14, 15 and 16, **Neuchâtel**, Switzerland hosted the International Skating Union World Junior Synchronized Skating Championships 2024.



And in volleyball, it's been a great season for the ladies of **Viteos Neuchâtel UC** who reached the European finals of the CEV Cup.



We were sorry to learn that Kelantan Football Club, which is based in Kota Bharu, our Newcastle in Malaysia was expelled from Malaysia Super League in January over their failures to paying players' salaries and the club having serious financial problems. The club had returned to the Super League in 2022, but had a strong earlier history. It won the treble in 2022 which is the Malaysia Super League titles, Malaysia FA Cup and Malaysia Cup.



Newcastle United has become the first English Premier League football club to be recognised as a “Football Club of Sanctuary”. The club and Newcastle United Foundation, the official charity arm of the club, have received the award following an external panel approval process, which involved demonstration of their impact on the lives of individuals seeking sanctuary within the community through provision of a varied range of tailor-made projects.



Families seeking sanctuary and young refugees who have recently arrived in the region are among those supported by Newcastle United Foundation, with access to free and inclusive programmes boosting mental and physical health, as well as employability and education support.

One of the key programmes supporting young refugees, asylum seekers and people with a migrant background is the Foundation's “Welcome Through Football” initiative. It provides an opportunity to assist with integration and inclusion, using passion for football as a platform for engagement.

City of Sanctuary UK coordinates, supports and develops these networks of welcome. From community groups to schools and universities, local councils to libraries and theatres, the organisation works with individuals, groups and agencies to encourage inclusivity and compassion for people from a forced displacement background.



Newcastle United Foundation project officer Ismael Bamba has been named Community Champion as part of a Premier League campaign - with a mural installed in his honour close to St. James' Park. The accolade was presented to Ismael by the Newcastle's' all-time leading goalscorer Alan Shearer. Ismael moved to Newcastle in 2006 as a child, escaping conflict during the first Ivorian civil war. He soon made friends and found comfort in attending Premier League Kicks sessions where he enjoyed free, supervised football with Foundation coaches.

Over 2000 people took part in the annual **Shinshiro** marathon race at the end of January, part of the Sanen Marathon series . It's set in the battlefield where the battles of Nagashino and Shirakuhara took place, a course that is rich in nature as well as history, and has a range of elevations.



The second round of the OSJ (Japanese) Trail Running Race Series will again be a 32k and a double 64k in **Shinshiro** on 23/24 March. It's a spectacular course that offers a variety of trails including rocky areas, forest roads, climbing areas, and ups and downs.

The demanding “double 64k”, which involves two laps around the course, won last year by Goshi Osada (see photo) is a race that only athletes who have previously completed 32K in less than 5 hours are eligible to participate. Shinshiro has hosted the trail runs several times before and is respected as a very attractive but challenging course.



Congratulations to Joel Vaughan and Ellie Harrison, winners of this year's main pro event at Surf Fest, the biggest surfing event in the southern hemisphere - held in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia.

The 38th edition of Surf Fest attracted over 800 competitors, in nine different events, over five weeks in February and March.



Joel and Ellie with their trophies and with Newcastle's Lord Mayor, Nuatali Nemes.

