

Distributed directly to over 2500 people and organisations in dozens of "Newcastles" around the world - help us reach more by sharing!

## OUR CONFERENCE SET FOR OCTOBER

### Nové Hradý and Nové Zámky will be our co-hosts

After a long delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we're very pleased to announce that **Nové Hradý** (Czech Republic) and **Nové Zámky** (Slovakia) will be the hosts for our next Newcastles of the World conference, which will take place between 12th and 17th October of this year. Please put the dates in your diary! We are encouraging delegates who will be taking a flight to the conference to book to and from Vienna. For those who need it, the conference organisers will collect delegates from Vienna airport, provide transport to Nové Hradý for the first part of the conference, on to Nové Zámky and back to Vienna. The conference proceedings will begin at 11am on 12th October.

The full conference programme will be published in the summer edition of our newsletter.

Contact us for information, ideas or help: [newcastlesoftheworld@gmail.com](mailto:newcastlesoftheworld@gmail.com)



### SHINSHIRO BLOSSOMS !

From early March to mid-April, Sakurabuchi Park in **Shinshiro**, Japan is again the site of the annual cherry blossom festival. The park overlooks the Toyokawa River, with the pink cherry blossoms blooming on both sides. At the festival, there are local traders and a range of music performances - a perfect way to enjoy a spring day.

### WELCOME TO ROBERT

Robert Dulfer, from **Nové Hradý**, Czech Republic will take over as Co-ordinator of our Newcastles of the World alliance from April - see page 10.



Two happy snaps from **Newcastle, Ontario**, Canada, one from the "Snowcastles" event that you can read about on page 6, and the other of Councillor Willie Woo and former Councillor Wendy Partner raising a glass on St Patrick's Day!



### INSIDE

- Europe's Biggest Winter Swim event in Neuburg - page 2
- "Game On" at Jaunpils Castle - page 3
- International Women's Day - page 5
- Herceg Novi's Colourful festival - page 6
- New Castle Indiana marks 200 years - p 9
- Zélie steps down - page 10
- Youth/Akhaltzikhe's chess success - page 11
- Sports - page 12 .. and lots more !

In **Nyborg**, excitement is rising over The Royal Run. It's a major event in Denmark when over 10,000 runners will be headed by either The Crown Prince or The Crown Princess. Presented as a huge community festival of running, Nyborg is proud to be the host, on May 29th. Many residents will take part in the Royal Run Relay, with training aimed at beginners and people who have not run for many years. The relay brings together groups from activity to activity throughout the municipality's local areas, tying the many communities together. Activities can be organised by formal as well as informal communities, for example, residents' associations, day care centres, schools, nursing homes, companies, or even friends and family groups.

The Council is encouraging communities to be part of the relay by arranging activities such as decorating its area for a royal party, arranging a treasure hunt or walk, or other event where the community can exercise together.



One of the relay training groups at the marina.



# MASOPUST IS BACK IN NOVÉ HRADY !



Masopust in the Czech Republic is a carnival of music, marching, eating and drinking, and of wearing masks and costume.

The timing and nature of this kind of festival vary in different countries and cultures (many will know “Mardi Gras”), but the origin is common - from pre-Christian times in ancient Greece and Rome.

After a two-year break, everyone was delighted that Novohradský Masopust, returned in February.

Before activities begin, members of the Association **Nové Hradý** Masopust (Carnival Association) officially asked Mayor Vladimír Hokr for permission to take over the town in a decades-old ritual. With permission given, the festivities started in full, with a focus on the grand parade through town, accompanied by brass bands. After parading through the town square, the troupe split up in three groups roaming other parts of the town, each accompanied by musicians and a large number of villagers in costume.

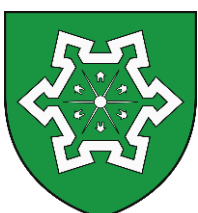
On the day before the main event, children aged 6-10 from the School Association for after-school care performed as mini-members of the official Masopust troupe, parading around the town square and dancing with townspeople. In the evening, there was a party for everyone in the hall of the Máj hotel .

## BRRR! - EUROPE'S BIGGEST WINTER SWIM EVENT IN NEUBURG

It was back again this year - Das Neuburger Donauschwimmen was held in the cold waters of the Danube beneath the magnificent castle of Neuburg, our "Newcastle" in Bavaria on the last Saturday in January. It's a spectacle that inspires both spectators and bathers, and around 2000 participants from all over Germany and around Europe are drawn to the event. Hard-nosed swimmers cover the four-kilometre swim from the Bittenbrunn barrage to the rowing club, often with their colourful and imaginative costumes. What began in 1970, when eight members of the lifeguard dared to try the ice test for fun, is now Europe's largest winter swim event.



**Nové Zámky**, along with other municipalities in Slovakia, has been taking part in the programme to help refugees from Ukraine. As previously reported in our newsletter, citizens of **Shinshiro**, Japan have been a very big help by raising a magnificent donation of 25,000 €.



The money has been used for refurbishment of two flats, one already being used as a home for two Ukrainian families with children. The second flat will be handed over to its new occupants from the beginning of April. Nové Zámky wishes to express its huge gratitude to the people of Shinshiro for their generous help!



# IT'S "GAME ON" AT JAUNPILS CASTLE !

What is "Castle Game Jam" ? It's a gaming development event, started in Sweden, that takes place every year in a castle in a different country, bringing together hundreds of participants - it has now arrived in Latvia, and the chosen castle is the one in Jaunpils!

The event will take place over a week in June and hundreds of participants from all over the world are expected from among the computer games community. Participants will be split into teams (one to four developers per team). Teams have to develop game prototypes within the week. The event also provides lectures, workshops, a trade fair, live music and other activities.

First built in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, Jaunpils castle was heavily damaged in war by Swedes in 1625. Later, an extra floor was added and the old fortress became a manor with all conveniences by the end of the 17th century. The building was partly reconstructed in the 18th century but the castle was burned down during the Russian Revolution of 1905. A year later it was rebuilt by architect Wilhelm Bockslaff. From the 16th century until 1920 the castle belonged to the family of the Baltic German baron von der Recke. During the Soviet occupation of Latvia, the interior of the castle was heavily reconstructed and for many years had typical Soviet interiors from the 1960s. In the 2000s, a team of Latvian designers refitted the interior of the castle. Today it features comfortable medieval style apartments which blend guest luxury with glimpses of the castle's history.



## Jazz & Blues at Nové Zámky

It can be proudly said that the town of Nové Zámky has made a recognised contribution to the musical scene of Slovakia over the years. One aspect of this is the famous Jazz Blues Jamboree, the 17th edition of which was held on February 17/18th. The festival is organised by the municipality with partners KultúrKorzó and Umelecké aktivty.



The jazzy Friday belonged to musicians from Nové Zámky and their projects – a debut album Impulse presenting Oliver Kucharovič Quartet, funky-soul-latin guitarist Ferenc Farkas and a new Slovak jazz fusion band Bereza & Kotlár Project.

The bluesy Saturday hosted an international list of artists. A folk-blues-roots Petra Börnerová Band from the Czech Republic is a unique project of family members, including a 13 year-old drummer. Slovakia's best female blues singer Silvia Josifoska introduced her latest album, and a Europe-wide renowned rhythm & blues band Sonny and his Wild Cows from Hungary put on an authentic 50s blues and rock 'n' roll show to close the festival.

## Neuchâtel Celebrates Republic Day !

It was a special anniversary for Neuchâtel on Republic Day this year, 1st March. With the exception of Swiss National Day (August 1), Swiss cantons set their public holidays independently. Republic Day is celebrated in the canton of Neuchâtel on March 1 every year. The official name of Neuchâtel is the Republic and Canton of Neuchâtel. Originally, it was a Principality ruled by several dynasties.

In 1707, it passed to King Frederick I of Prussia of the Hohenzollern dynasty and, in 1815, Frederick William III allowed Neuchâtel to join the Swiss Confederation as a full member. Neuchâtel became the first and only monarchy in the Confederation, as the rest of the cantons were republican. The situation changed in 1848 when Neuchâtel was established as a republic following a peaceful revolution. So this year it was the 175th anniversary - and it was celebrated in style with cannon fire and a march starting from Valangin, a historic village that has joined the commune of Neuchâtel since the merger.

Hundreds of local people joined the march.



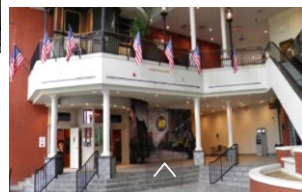
The historic Warner Cascade Theatre Museum in **New Castle, Pennsylvania, USA** will join in this year's centenary celebration of the Warner Brothers Film Studios. There will be a programme of events designed to bring national focus to the historic site where the four Warner Brothers – Harry, Albert, Sam and Jack – opened their very first theatre – the Cascade – on February 2nd, 1907.

Pictured ahead of the celebration is theatre museum founder Jerry Kern, with Cass Warner, granddaughter of Harry Warner who visited recently.

The Warner Studios officially celebrated its incorporation 16 years after their first theatre, on April 4th, 1923.

The local series of events in New Castle will kick off on Tuesday, April 4th with an open house and free film presentations. The Museum will open from 11am to 4pm with a viewing of Cass Warner's celebrated Documentary – *The Brothers Warner* – in the Cascade Theatre.

Meanwhile, the young at heart will enjoy continuous Looney Tunes in the Bijou Theatre - with free popcorn and liquid refreshments ! The event is being co-sponsored by The New Castle Public Library and Lawrence County Historical Society who will be present with information and activities at the event.



## STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM THE MAYORAL BURSARY FUND

In **South Africa**, the Newcastle Municipality Mayoral registration scheme, which Newcastles of the World has previously supported, has again bolstered hopes for a brighter future to students from across the municipality. Over 200 high-achievers from every ward of the municipality gathered at the Town Hall to receive confirmation of the financial support that will help them pursue their dreams of attending universities and colleges.



The Mayoral Bursary Scheme is an annual initiative that covers tertiary registration fees for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who aspire to enter higher education. The students received their bursaries to any registered institution of their choice. The Mayor, Councillor Xolani Dube, gave each student an appreciation certificate to acknowledge their achievement of good results

The Mayor told the students: "I encourage and urge you all to go out to your respective universities and colleges to represent Newcastle, and most importantly, to put Newcastle on the map for all the right reasons. As the Newcastle Municipality we have invested in your education, and I trust that each one of you will do us proud"



## THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY IS 100 YEARS OLD !

This year, the Village of **Newcastle, Ontario** is preparing for the 100th Anniversary of its Community Hall built by the Massey family in 1923. The centenary celebration itself will be on July 29th with a day-long street fair highlighting the beautiful hall which is the centrepiece of the local community. However, there will be other activities during the year that reflect the importance of the building to Newcastle.

## Neuchâtel to have new communal council

The Swiss authorities announced in early March the launch of the first communal assemblies that will be set up throughout the country. These assemblies will allow anyone, regardless of age or civic status, to become involved in the life of their neighbourhood by making proposals or challenging the local executive.

In Neuchâtel this is an initiative that residents have been waiting for since the merger brought surrounding villages into the municipality. The first assembly will take place in Valangin on 29 March.



Members of the Conseil Communal launch the assembly.

MPKBBRI, the Municipal Council of **Kota Bharu**, our Newcastle in Malaysia, has won a 5 Star Award at the annual Local Authority Convention for its performance in 2022 under the Local Government Star Rating System (SPB-Assessment Audit).

The 5-star rating was achieved by only two out of 12 local authorities in the whole of Kelantan Province. The Council said: “Hopefully, this success will set the benchmark for the continuous effort to maintain MPKBBRI as one of the outstanding local authorities in Kelantan and Malaysia in general.”

## KOTA BHARU'S FIVE STAR ACHIEVEMENT



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - MARCH 8TH

An award-winning screenwriter and humanitarian received a Key to the City of **Newcastle, Australia** at the annual Lord Mayor's International Women's Day event at City Hall.

From her Newcastle home, **Vanessa Alexander** (left in photo) helped more than 100 Afghan women and their families, at risk of retribution from the Taliban, out of Afghanistan after the fall of Kabul in August 2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Fifty-six of these refugees are now living in or around Newcastle, 32 are in Ireland with the support of Ms Alexander's sister, Elise; others have resettled in Brazil and the US.

She is also a writer and producer, best known for her work on Vikings: *Valhalla* and *The Great* - for the latter, she was nominated for 2021 Best Comedy and Best New Series at the Writers Guild of America Awards.



On International Women's Day, March 8th, **Newcastle upon Tyne** celebrated the extraordinary – but, until now, inadequately recognised - work of **Mary Astell**.

A commemorative plaque was unveiled by Councillor Veronica Dunn, Sheriff and Deputy Lord Mayor (pictured right), at Amen Corner, outside the city's Cathedral, and an afternoon “Working for Women” event showcased women's initiatives, hosted by Northumbria University, the City Council and Newcastle Cathedral.

Mary Astell, born in 1666, published innovative and challenging works arguing for women's equality, two centuries before the feminist political movement took shape.

She lobbied for the need to widen women's access to education, and argued that society needed to offer women alternative life options to marriage. Mary was born and raised in Newcastle, where she was educated using books from the cathedral library (then the Church of Saint Nicholas). She went on to found a girl's charity school and have a prominent career as a published author, having moved to London. She died in 1731.

For more information, see: <https://maryonthetoon.co.uk/all-about-astell/>



For International Women's Day, March 8th, we also feature **Vera Brittain**, born in **Newcastle-under-Lyme**, England, 130 years ago.

She was an English Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse, writer, feminist, and pacifist through the League of Nations Union and the Peace Pledge Union.

Her extraordinary life was featured in a film named after her most famous book “Testament of Youth”.

The book was Vera's vivid picture of the horror and futility of war based on her own experiences in the First World War, and gives a voice to the wartime role of women.



Her daughter Shirley Williams was a well-known politician and former cabinet member in the UK government.

# HERCEG NOVI'S COLOURFUL FESTIVAL

The 54th edition of the famous Mimosa Festival in **Herceg Novi**, our Newcastle in Montenegro, has finished for the year, celebrating the yellow flower that blooms in what is Europe's earliest springtime. This is the biggest winter tourist and promotional event in the country and featured a huge programme of music, dance, the famous local marching majorettes, masquerade balls and the traditional mimosa, fish and wine festival.



The Mimosa Festival ended with an international carnival parade – with carnival groups this year from Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, and for the first time from Italy and Greece. The presentation of the carnival groups was preceded by the performance of City Music and majorettes, and the first group was from Herceg Novi itself, the NGO Bokecija Maškare, connecting Boka and Venice in a highly creative way. This was the sixth international carnival and it gathered around 800 participants. The parade of groups was accompanied by delegations from the Municipality of Herceg Novi headed by President Stevan Katic and representatives of the Federation of Carnival Cities, led by President Josip Silov.



## THE SNOWCASTLES OF NEWCASTLE

Despite the lovely early spring in Montenegro, it's still winter in much of the northern hemisphere. In our **Newcastle in Ontario, Canada**, early March saw the "Snowcastles of Newcastle" competition, with individuals and teams creating original snowcastle sculptures outside the local library (*winners, the Hearl family, are top right*).



Organised by "A Gift of Art", it was also an opportunity to promote and raise funds for local causes, such as the appeal to build a new hospice in Newcastle, Clarington.



At the 2012 conference

We wish a very happy retirement to **Azman Mohddaham** who, this month, completes 33 years of service to the municipality of **Kota Bharu**, our Newcastle in Malaysia. Azman has represented his community at Newcastles of the World conferences and has been our main contact for his city, where he has been public relations manager and principal spokesperson for many years.



# Neuchâtel's Jeunes-Rives Park is the Flagship project for the City

The redevelopment of Jeunes-Rives is the flagship project of the municipal authority of the City of Neuchâtel. After a long wait - over 20 years since the sixth Swiss National Exhibition Expo.02 took place in Neuchâtel on the site - it is finally being redeveloped. This 70,000 sq metre park will offer a vast urban beach, a large games area and equipment centre for leisure and sports, while hosting cultural events and other events. It's a space between the green and blue escapes in the heart of the city, a link between the historic centre of the city and the lake. Work began with the demolition of the old concrete square on the lake's edge.



How the new park will look (left and above) - with an image from the 2002 Expo inset

## THE SECOND DANUBE BRIDGE AND THE ENGLISH GARDEN IN NEUBURG

The plan to build a second bridge in Neuburg across the Danube, to alleviate the ever-growing congestion of the Elisenbrücke in the city centre, has been long-debated and has been controversial. In November, Neuburg City Council voted to apply to the government of Upper Bavaria to initiate the planning approval procedure, and a public consultation has been taking place. There has been misinformation about the line of the eastern bypass to the new bridge, with suggestions that it would run through the middle of the much-loved "English Garden".

Lord Mayor Dr Bernhard Gmehling (*second right*) and the mayors Dr Johann Habermeyer (*far left*) and Peter Segeth, as representatives of the city of Neuburg, are photographed with an information board showing that the route would only touch the extreme eastern edge of the garden.

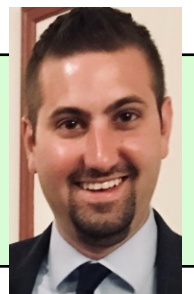


The English Garden was created between 1803 and 1807, using the English Garden in Munich as a model.



The Garden has been a protected landscape area since 1987 and is a valuable alluvial forest, where mighty oaks, ash trees and elms from the early years can still be found.

The city of New Castle, Pennsylvania has a new Mayor in place for 2023, with Councillor Bryan Cameron succeeding Chris Frye. Mr Frye has become City Administrator, running the day-to-day operations of the Council. Mayor Cameron was first elected to the City Council in 2019. He graduated in 2008 from New Castle High School, and 2012 from Westminster College with a degree in business administration. He works as a Store Leader for a supermarket chain.



### 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, South Africa 2004 and 2010, UK 2006 (Newcastle-under-Lyme) & 2012 (Newcastle upon Tyne), Germany (Neuburg) in 2008, Nové Hradý (Czech Republic) in 2014, Newcastle, Ontario, Canada in 2016 and in Shinshiro again in 2018. Our aim is to foster individual, group and civic friendships, with practical links through culture, education, business and tourism.

# BUSINESS AND TOURISM



**DOWNTOWN**  
The Heart of New Castle

Because of its success, the New Castle Main Street organisation in **New Castle, Indiana** has been selected as a presenter in Boston at the National “Main Street Now 2023” Conference on 27-29th March.

Since 2014, New Castle Main Street has been helping revitalise downtown New Castle. In 2022 alone, eleven new businesses opened in the Main Street central district. A total of 51 businesses are now located there and 17 of those businesses have female owners. New market-rate apartments are also part of the ongoing revitalisation.

New Castle Main Street Executive Director Carrie Barrett explains, “The Main Street movement is committed to strengthening our community through preservation-based economic development.” The mission of the New Castle Main Street is to act as a catalyst to develop and sustain a unique and thriving downtown for residents, business merchants, property owners and visitors so that the communities of New Castle and Henry County, Indiana flourish.

New Castle Main Street has carried out this mission with partnerships, entrepreneurship efforts and events. The Building Renovation Assistance Program (BRAP) was a matching grant programme that facilitated improvements to downtown properties. The project “Henry County Creates” provides support and education for budding entrepreneurs through the Business Builders workshop series. The program culminates in a pitch contest that awards up to \$5,000. The POPPED shop, located centrally, is a place for entrepreneurs to “test drive” a brick-and-mortar store for a day, week or weekend. And a strong and varied events programme supports business and brings in the crowds, including Broad Street Cruise-Ins, Fourth Fridays, Live @ The Arts Park Concerts, New Castle On Tap and seasonal parades.

## A New Shinshiro Introduction Video

The city of Shinshiro, Japan has produced a new City Introduction Video with high resolution quality pictures. Among a vast range of attractions, the video shows the natural beauty of Shinshiro; the Nagashino Battle Flag Festival (with matchlock gun demonstration) and other historical reenactments; and the Shinshiro Rally and other sports events. This video was filmed and produced by the staff of Shinshiro city. You can watch the video via the QR code to the right.



**Coal and Newcastle** - Newcastle remains not only **Australia's** largest coal export port, but is the biggest in the world. Newcastle exported 136 million tonnes of coal in 2022 with a value of A\$61.40 billion (38bn euros), a year-on-year increase of 119.6%. It is a significant contributor to wealth in the region.



## NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE - FAIRTRADE CITY

Exactly twenty years ago, when Newcastle upon Tyne became a Fairtrade City, it was one of the first cities in the UK to achieve this, and it has maintained its status ever since.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2023, this year between 27 February and 12 March is the annual focus when people and organisations commit to take action to deliver a fairer deal for those producing goods such as coffee, cocoa and bananas. Fairtrade offers people who farm and produce these goods a minimum price. The Fairtrade Premium payment helps deliver fairer incomes for farmers and workers and provides them with resources to spend on what their community needs - supporting them to plan for and adapt to the cost of living crisis and the effects of climate change. There are many organisations across Newcastle upon Tyne who support and sell Fairtrade products.

The Newcastle Fairtrade Partnership comprises organisations across the city who sell or support Fairtrade, including Fairtrade schools and colleges, and places of worship. Fairtrade City status is awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation, the UK member of Fairtrade International (FLO), which sets standards.



**Kota Bharu**, our Newcastle in Malaysia, is famed for its markets - and a new one has just been opened by the Chief Minister of Kelantan Province. The official inauguration ceremony for the Tok Kenal Market took place on 19 March.

It's a 8560 sq feet market that provides 28 fixed trader stalls and an open floor facility to accommodate 60 weekly market vendors.



# NOVÉ ZÁMKY'S SPECIAL VISITOR

The President of Slovakia, Zuzana Čaputová, visited **Nové Zámky** earlier this month and held talks with Mayors of the region in the historic Imperial Riding Hall. In the morning, she had a discussion with students of P. Pázmaň Grammar School.

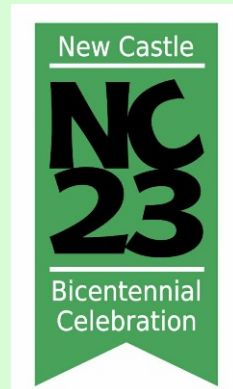


The President is received by Mayor Otokar Klein (top left), meets regional Mayors and other dignitaries ((left, and above), and addresses students at the school (right)

## NEW CASTLE INDIANA CELEBRATES 200 YEARS

After last year's Bicentennial celebration of Henry County, Indiana, this year it's the turn of the county's capital city, **New Castle** to mark 200 years since its formation.

The program of events for NC23 is still being added to, but, as well as exhibitions and presentations at the county's Historical Society Museum, there will be a local writer gathering at downtown plaza in April to help authors sell history books about Henry County and New Castle; the launch of the New Castle Passport as a way to highlight historical sites around the city for citizens to visit; the TNT Marathon (a new event which could become a regular fixture, if successful); a knockout basketball record attempt at New Castle High School Fieldhouse ( the largest High School Fieldhouse in the world) and a family reunion / dinner / events at Baker Park in July - Baker Park is a beautiful historic park in New Castle with a skate park, swimming pool, picnic areas, disc golf and other amenities.



The logo for the year is a tribute to New Castle's famous son, the "LOVE" pop artist Robert Indiana.

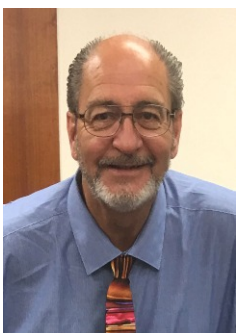
**SURFEST in Newcastle, Australia** is celebrating its 37<sup>th</sup> edition in late March. It's the largest surfing festival in the southern hemisphere. Over 800 competitors from across the Asia-Pacific region compete for cash prizes and World Surf League rating points.



## CELEBRATING COMMUNITY "HEROES"

Community heroes are to be honoured for the first time in a local awards scheme. **Newcastle-under-Lyme** Borough Council is launching the inaugural "Newcastle Heroes" awards, with a ceremony at the Mayor's Charity Ball at the end of March. Categories for the awards will include "Community Champion", "Young Hero" and "Lifetime Achievement".

"Newcastle Heroes" is being launched as part of year-long celebrations marking the 850th anniversary of Newcastle-under-Lyme's incorporation as a borough.



## MAYOR TO RUN FOR A FOURTH TERM

Greg York has announced that he will be running for his fourth term as Mayor for the City of **New Castle, Indiana** in the elections later this year. If successful, he will be the first person in city history to win four consecutive elections. Mayor York was born in New Castle and graduated from New Castle High School. He is married, the father of two sons, and a grandfather. Bitten by the entrepreneurial bug, he worked from the ground up and is currently the owner/manager of a local vault company. He's a member of the Board of Henry County Chamber of Commerce, and a keen sports fan, especially basketball.

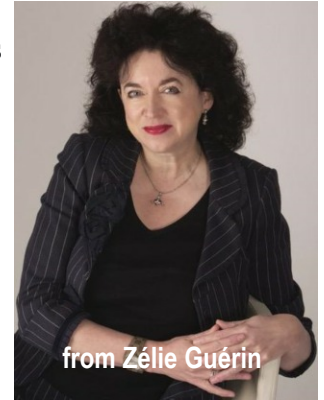
# FROM THE NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD SECRETARIAT

## Zélie's Message as she steps down as Project Director

"I have news to share with you. Whilst I would like to stay within the community that is Newcastle of the World, I have decided that it's time to make some changes and step down from my role of Project Director. This is a decision not taken lightly. With a long and successful career in international relations and international project management I feel I'm at a point in my life where I now need more time for family and friends.

"It has been a privilege to facilitate, promote and lead interesting projects in the fields of education / tourism / education – business and youth. This has involved me in great collaboration, sharing cultural experiences with you, achieving positive outcomes through projects that can continue, lovely friendships made, as well as adventures, fun and some challenges along the way.

"I would like to draw your attention to the "Newcastles Passport". This is an initiative that the Secretariat developed. It promotes tourism and friendship between Newcastles. It's true to say that such a special experience awaits you, if you decide to visit another Newcastle. You can look forward to meeting warm, welcoming people, visiting historic, fascinating places whilst having memorable cultural experiences, as I have done. :



<https://newcastlesoftheworld.com/passport/>

"Newcastles of the World touches my heart. I think that everyone who gets involved in it wishes to remain in some way. For my part, I'm going to continue my online English Language / Introduction to British Culture lessons with the students of Shinshiro, Japan, in partnership with the Shinshiro International Exchange Association (SIEA). I also look forward to future travel and cultural experiences in our great Newcastles across the world!"

## ROBERT DULFER TAKES OVER AS NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD COORDINATOR

As well as Zélie stepping down as Project Director, there's another change at the end of March in the arrangements for managing Newcastles of the World.

David Faulkner, who has performed the role of Newcastles of the World Coordinator since 2010, will pass that role to **ROBERT DULFER** from **Nové Hradý**, our Newcastle in the Czech Republic.

David will continue to support the alliance by producing our quarterly newsletter, managing the website and helping with information and advice.

Robert has already contributed much to Newcastles of the World - as one of our main contacts in Nové Hradý, together with Mayor Vladimir Hokr as member of the Board of the Association, and as programme director for the 2014 Newcastles of the World conference there.

He will also be programme director for our conference this October.

Robert is a Dutchman and attended Utrecht University. He moved to the Czech Republic to help establish and run the Trebon Otter Foundation, funded by the Council of Europe's Bern Convention.

After four years, Robert left and founded - and is also Director of - the Rozmberk Society, a non-profit organisation that promotes heritage preservation and regional development in South Bohemia. He has been in this role for 25 years. The Society operates the Peasant and Emigration Museum in the village of Kojakovice. The museum focuses on village life and emigration to America in the period 1850 – 1918 and on WWI. The Society also runs the historic blacksmith workshop (the Smithy) in Nové Hradý and closely cooperates on several projects with the Town of Nové Hradý.

Robert now also works as Grant Manager for the COST Action PLANTMETALS at the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences, based in Ceske Budejovice, funded by the European COST Association (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).



Welcome as our new alliance coordinator Robert !

This project brings together over two hundred researchers, students, and industry stakeholders from 30 countries to produce new insights into plant functioning, and propose innovations for agriculture, crop production and breeding, as well as environmental protection.

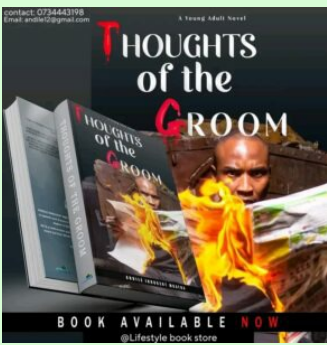
*See page 11 for a personal note from Robert on David and Zélie*

## ... ROBERT DULFER SAYS:

“When David announced he was to finish as Co-ordinator, both Nové Hradý Mayor Vladimír Hokr and I immediately offered to help to make sure that the Newcastles of the World alliance would continue. When it was suggested I would take over David’s role, I felt honoured but also realised that there were some big shoes to fill. For over a decade, David has been the motor for our alliance and, in a friendly but relentless manner, made sure we kept going and stayed motivated. For this, we owe him our gratitude.

“With the help of our Nové Hradý, I believe that we will be able to continue this work and make our cooperation even more intensive and inclusive. As a first step, the Czech Town of Nové Hradý will organise the next Newcastles Conference in October 2023, together with Nové Zámky in Slovakia. At this conference we will celebrate the 25 year existence of the Association since the 1998 Shinsiro meeting in Japan. More importantly, this will be a working conference where we will decide how we will continue with our Newcastles of the World alliance, and how we can ensure more active and closer cooperation. That we will continue is without doubt; David and Zélie, thanks for all you did and will still do.”

## Andile Mbatha launches award-winning book in Newcastle



Andile Mbatha, a former resident of Newcastle KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa has taken the literary world by storm with the publication of his book, “Thoughts of the Groom”.

The novel was given a local launch on 21 March, at the Newcastle Town Hall, where Mbatha expressed his joy at the success of the book, which has already sold 11,000 copies and is receiving international acclaim.

Since its publication, Mbatha has received positive feedback on his work, winning an award at the Washington Book Festival in January 2023,

and being nominated for the London Literature Awards. He attended the University of Cape Town and obtained qualifications in drama to pursue his passion. Describing the novel as a young adult love story, Mbatha said that he was initially a playwright for television and theatre.



## SPORT

The City of Neuchâtel, Switzerland has held its annual ceremony of recognition and celebration for deserving sportsmen and women of the past year. Over 400 athletes fulfilled the criteria established to obtain a sports award from the City.

During the year 2022, they distinguished themselves in a wide range of disciplines: gymnastics, swimming, martial arts, ball sports, rowing and many others. Two merits of honour were awarded, one to the Neuchâtel Fencing Society, the other to judoka Evelyne Tschopp, with a special distinction to the organisers of the successful Eurogym gymnastics event last July.



In a similar event in Nyborg, Denmark, congratulations were given by the City Council to the Danish champions from Oysters Softball, Nyborg Kegleklub, and Nyborg Swimming Club, European champion in dressage from Krikkerne in Herrested and Double Silver medal winner at the World Cup in Kickboxing from Nyborg Karateklub.



Neuchâtel Chancellor Daniel Veuve, in the centre of the photo to the right, presents the special merit awards.





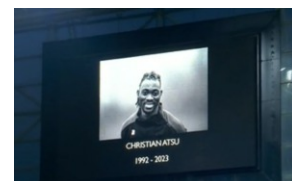
It's such sad news that former **Newcastle United** footballer Christian Atsu lost his life in the terrible earthquake that has devastated both sides of the Turkish-Syrian border. Aged only 31, Christian was born in Ghana and played 65 matches for his national team.

He began his career with Porto, joined Chelsea in the Premier League and also played for Everton and Bournemouth before joining Newcastle in 2016, spending five years with the club and playing over 100 times as a winger and attacking midfielder. He then moved to Al Raed in Saudi Arabia and on to Hatayspor in Turkey; he scored the goal that won his team the match on 5 February, the day before the earthquake that killed him.

Christian represented Ghana at the 2014 FIFA World Cup and four Africa Cup of Nations tournaments. He helped the team finish as runners-up at the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations, in which he also won Player of the Tournament and Goal of the Tournament.

50,000 supporters at St James' Park, the home of Newcastle United, paid tribute to Christian before the match against Liverpool. His wife Marie-Claire Rupio and his three children were present – the family home is still Newcastle.

At his funeral in Ghana, Atsu was remembered for his philanthropic work, particularly by the children's charity *Arms Around The Child* for which he was an ambassador. There his legacy will live on through the many hundreds if not thousands of lives he has helped - he was the main benefactor of a new school that is nearing completion in Senya Beraku in Ghana, and visited children and the project there on several occasions.



## SHINSHIRO RALLY BRINGS EXCITEMENT

The exciting **Shinshiro** motor rally - part of the All-Japan rally Championship - took place in early March and was won by Heikki Kovalainen from Finland with co-driver Sae Kitagawa of Japan, from Team Aicello. Congratulations to them both!

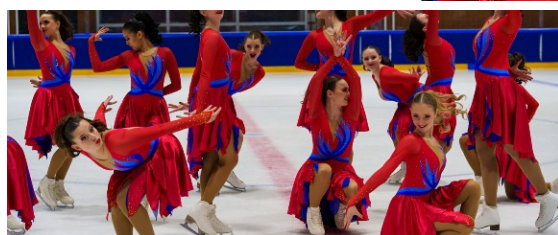
This year's rally (race distance 63km) was held with spectators for the first time in four years.

## SKATING ON SWISS ICE

The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Neuchâtel** Trophy, one of the premier skating events in Switzerland, took place in

January

Team Helsinki Rockettes (Finland) were the competition winners, *pictured right*.



The competition attracted teams from France, Italy, Germany and the USA as well as Finland and Switzerland.



## FUTURE OF SUPERCARS EVENT TO BE REVIEWED

The overall winner of the Thrifty-sponsored **Newcastle Supercars 500** competition on 11/12 March was Australian Chaz Mostert but the individual winners of the two 95-lap, 250km races were Australian Cameron Waters and New Zealander Shane van Gisbergen (*pictured left*). Van Gisbergen actually also won the first race but was stripped of the victory for running an illegal cooling system.

The Newcastle 500 is an annual motor racing event for Supercars, held at the Newcastle Street Circuit in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia since 2017. The event was not held in 2020, 2021 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023 race was the final race to be delivered under the agreement between City of Newcastle, Supercars Australia and Destination NSW signed in 2016. After four races, there will now be a community consultation process about the future.

If the New South Wales Government decides to continue backing the Supercars event then Newcastle City Council will have the final decision on whether Newcastle continues as the host city. Feedback from the consultation will allow councillors to better understand the community's views on issues around economic benefit or challenges, perceptions of the event and its impact on the visitor economy.

# YOUTH

Congratulations to 13 year-old Saba Papashvili of **Akhalsikhe**, our “Newcastle” in the Republic of Georgia, the winner in February of the first-ever Newcastles of the World online chess tournament. Well over 100 young people, up to the age of 15, from seven different “Newcastles” took part.

Many thanks to Martin Stenmann of **Nyborg**, our Newcastle in Denmark, who led the organisation of the tournament. Students from the Czech Republic and Australia were second and third. Our photos show the winner, Saba; Martin with participants from Nyborg, and – on the screen behind him – a Zoom link to participants from Shinshiro, Japan; other competitors from Georgia.



## YOUTH COUNCIL NEWS

The Youth Council members of **Shinshiro**, Japan have decided on their projects for the year:

**The Young Connection Project** – to stimulate daily exchanges in communities by producing and distributing information promoting interaction among young people.

**The Pre-conception Care Project** – aims to make Shinshiro City a place where people can have and raise children with peace of mind. This will be by organising events and publicising lectures on sex education for young people who will become future parents.

**The YouTube Advertising Project** - aims to make Shinshiro a place where people of different generations visit the city again and again. The idea is to create and share family-themed video and internet promotions.



Shinshiro's Youth Council members, with Mayor Hirofuyuki Shimoe (2<sup>nd</sup> from right on 2<sup>nd</sup> row from the back)

## Shinshiro Student Wins Speech Award



On January 29<sup>th</sup>, Shinshiro's junior high school student Daniel Hamada, originally from Brazil, entered Higashi Mikawa Japanese Speech contest and received a Special Award.

The contest is a speech competition in Japanese held by five cities located in the eastern part of Aichi prefecture.

The contestants are those who do not speak Japanese as their mother tongue. Daniel made a speech about "how to use our time". His open and fresh sense of how he feels about Japan and his family impressed the audience.

There were 21 contestants in two categories, 10 elementary and junior high school students, and 11 high school students and adults.

Recently, the swearing-in ceremony of the members of the first youth parliament in **Nové Zámky**, Slovakia was held.

The need to establish the parliament was expressed by young people themselves back in 2018 and they started to work on its formation immediately.

Unfortunately all efforts were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they did not give up and soon the pledge of the first members was taken.

Now there are 21 young pioneers looking for even more collaborators to continue to fulfil the real needs of children and young people in Nové Zámky.



You're never too too young to visit one of the castles after which our "Newcastles" are named. Here it's the 14th Century castle of **Jaunpils**, our Newcastle in Latvia, welcoming very young people for an event at the castle.



## NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD – MAIN CONTACTS (as at March 2023)

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