

Newcastles News

The Newsletter of "Newcastles of the World" • May - June - July 2017

MAYOR VLADIMIR TAKES THE NEWCASTLES MESSAGE TO NEW PLACES



Vladimir Hokr, Mayor of Nové Hradky in the Czech Republic visited three other "Newcastles" in eastern Europe at the end of March, accompanied by his Deputy Mayor Ladislava Bártová, to spread the message about our friendship alliance and to explore opportunities for future cooperation. See page 2 for details of his journey to Nove Zamky in Slovakia, Kaštel Novi in Croatia (right) and Herceg Novi in Montenegro (pictured left with host) - over 2800km! Thank you for your commitment, Vladimir!



Nové Zámky were represented at our conference in Canada and we are delighted that they have since confirmed formal membership of "Newcastles of the World". Mayor Hokr later paid a second visit to Nové Zámky and brought back paintings for their "Spring in Newcastles" exhibition of paintings and photos which has just opened and runs until late June; even better news is that Nové Zámky will show this exhibition in their town this summer !



The **Newcastles Passport** scheme is live now for Neuchâtel, Shinshiro, Newcastle upon Tyne and New Castle, Pennsylvania, with others poised to join. We have stickers to go in the windows of the participating restaurants, shops and hotels. Contact Zélie Guérin on zelie@internationalnewcastle.org.uk to discuss how to get on board. For an example on our website, see <https://newcastlesoftheworld.com/projects/the-newcastle-passport-for-visitors/neuchatel-switzerland-passport/>

NEWCASTLES NEWS

INSIDE FROM:

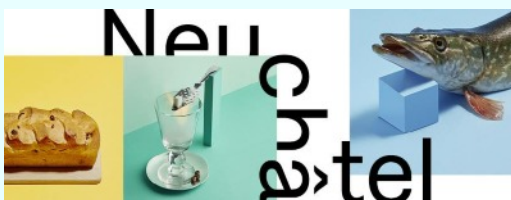
Shinshiro, Japan
Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Neuburg, Germany
Jaunpils, Latvia
Kota Bharu, Malaysia
Nyborg, Denmark
Akhalsikhe, Georgia
Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa
Nové Hradky, Czech Republic
Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
Ontario, Canada
New South Wales, Australia
Newcastle-under-Lyme, UK
Nove Zamky, Slovakia
New Castle, Indiana, USA
New Castle Pennsylvania, USA



The members of the organising committee for this summer's **Schlossfest** (castle festival) in Neuburg an der Donau, Germany are preparing in costume! **Schlossfest** is from June 30th to July 2nd and from July 7th to July 9th. Visit www.schlossfest.de

SHINSHIRO GETTING READY

The team that is planning next year's 20th anniversary conference of the Newcastles' alliance in **Shinshiro City** is already in place - Tomoko Tamai, Rumi Matsushita and Harushige Mori. The team has held two meetings to enlist volunteers in the city and staff at City Hall to help make it a very special event.



NEUCHÂTEL IS SWISS "CITY OF TASTE" FOR 2017 !

On March 12th renowned chefs from the Neuchâtel canton in Switzerland helped people enjoy products from the region: fish from the lake, Neuchâtel sausage, Neuchâtel cheeses as well as delicious Suchard chocolate and hand-crafted Neuchâtel bread. There was also a chance to savour the renowned absinthe and wines. This was the 'Festin neuchâtelois' ('Feast at Neuchâtel') but it's just the start - because Neuchâtel is Switzerland's "city of taste" in 2017!

A whole host of fantastic culinary and cultural events will take place, allowing the artisans of taste in Neuchâtel to put their valuable expertise under the spotlight all year in Neuchâtel. Check out www.neuchatelvilledugout2017.ch

EATING TOGETHER TO COMBAT LONELINESS IN NYBORG

On 24th April the nationwide event "Denmark eats together" took place – the ambition was to have over 50,000 Danes meet over a meal and ultimately tackle loneliness through community dining. The five chosen venues were Aalborg, Aarhus, Esbjerg, Copenhagen – and Nyborg, our “Newcastle” which hosted the largest of the main events. 630 guests were lucky to get tickets for "Denmark eats together" –the event was sold out in six days. 50 students from Nyborg Efterskole were volunteers and helped out.



Mayor Kenneth Muhs said: “We were proud to have developed such a major event in Nyborg. There was good food, lots of good fun, Legos for the kids, and most importantly it created lots of new friendships and unity at the tables”

The People's Movement Against Solitude was behind "Denmark Eats Together" - more than 70 associations are part of this movement as well as the host municipalities.

Free lessons in Neuchâtel to facilitate the mobility of the elderly

There's a focus in May on the mobility of the elders in Neuchâtel through a series of free courses organised by the City with Büro für Mobilität (bfm) and Pro Senectute. The aim is to promote as much freedom of movement and independence as possible. On the menu are introduction to the use of electric bikes, practical workshops to master touch-screen cash machines and workshops to take the bus with a walker.



THANKS TO GREAT VOLUNTEERS

The Municipality of Clarington recently thanked volunteer groups for their contributions to the community during ‘A night among the stars’ volunteer recognition event held at Newcastle Community Hall. Among those honoured were 45 local community groups and their chosen volunteers. It was a resounding success with some 275 people in attendance.

Clarington Mayor Adrian Foster thanked the volunteers for their dedication and continued commitment to their organisations. Mayor Foster told the volunteers they were “building a caring, compassionate community.” “Volunteers make up the very fabric of our community, they assist in improving our quality of life,” added Mayor Foster.

Among those recognised were: Samuel Wilmot Nature Area Management; Newcastle Horticultural Society; Newcastle Memorial Arena Management Board; Newcastle Village Community Hall Board; Newcastle Village Concerts; Newcastle Village and District Historical Society; Newcastle Lions Club

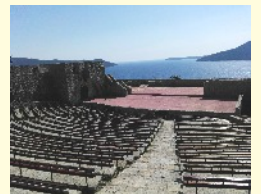
MAYOR VLADIMIR HOKR WRITES:

“At the conference in Canada I was very happy to meet our “Newcastle cousins“ from Slovakia for the first time. We spoke a lot with Deputy Mayor Lukáš and colleagues and we decided to meet again. In wintertime we spoke again about next steps of our cooperation. In February I met tourism representatives from Herceg Novi (Newcastle) from Montenegro at the Prague Holiday World show, and we spoke also about Newcastles of the world. Our friend from Montenegro knew about us from our newsletter and we started to plan the next meeting about future cooperation. Three years ago I had also contacted the Croatian Newcastle – Kaštel Novi - and we have stayed in contact.

In the last week of March I decided to take the next step. With my first vice mayor Ladislava Bártová we travelled to these three Newcastles to open discussions about cooperation. We had a very warm welcome in Nové Zámky (population 42,000) where we met Lukáš, Tunde, Gabriel and other representatives.. We spoke about our common history (The Duke of Buquoy – owner of Nové Hradý was killed - in Nové Zámky in 1621!), about cultural interests and especially about possible schools links. After our official meeting my friends showed us Nové Zámky by night - the bar on the square was particularly nice!

Next day we travelled next day to Croatia, where we stayed overnight in Split and continued on Sunday to Montenegro (population 25,000) where we met representative of the town and the President of the cultural festival Hercegfest. He showed us their most important cultural monuments and specially fortress Kanli kula (Bloody fortress). Herceg Novi is a very nice town, even in early the spring sea attracted us to swim but we just walked on the promenade and tasted fantastic sea fruits and wine. Herceg Novi has a very famous opera festival, carnival and other cultural events. So I hope that we continue to meet and that in early future their representatives will come to Nové Hradý and join us in our Newcastles of the world family.

I feel the same also about the Croatian Newcastle – Kaštel Novi has about 7 000 inhabitants and is part of the town Kaštela with other 6 historical Kaštels (castles). Kaštel Novi is situated just a few kilometres from the capital of Dalmatia Split and only 5 km from the international airport. It's also a very nice town on the seaside with growing tourism. Joško and Grgica were our guides and it was in a very friendly atmosphere that we discussed possibilities of future cooperation, which we will be sure to follow up.”



MAYOR IS AN INTERNATIONALLY- SUCCESSFUL OPERA SINGER

In November 2014, Otokar Klein was elected Mayor of **Nové Zámky**, the town of his birth and his home, as an Independent.

But before his political career, Mr Klein already had a distinguished career in another field – as an opera singer and popular concert artist. He regularly performs on international stages: State Opera Budapest, Vienna State Opera, Zurich Opera, Dresden State Opera, Opéra de Nice, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie Brussels, Teatro di San Carlo Naples and many others.

He studied opera at the Conservatory and the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and in 1999, made his debut at the National Theatre in Prague.



His successful roles include: Almaviva, The Barber of Seville in Vienna State Opera; Lindoro, Rossini, The Italian Girl in Algiers in Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden; Jeník, Smetana, The Bartered Bride in Zurrich, Ernesto from Donizetti's buffa Don Pasquale in Opéra de Nice; tenors part in Orff's Carmina Burana in Teatro Regio Turin.

He is a soloist of the Opera of the Slovak National Theatre and has worked with many world-famous conductors including Daniel Barenboim.

Before becoming mayor, in his hometown Nové Zámky he regularly organised an opera gala concert called Otokar Klein and Guests. Now, Mr Klein puts his political role and his commitment to the people of Nove Zamky ahead of his singing career.

NINO - A YOUNG GLOBAL LEADER

Nino Zambakhidze, head of the Georgian Farmers Association, has been named as Young Global Leader of 2017 from Georgia. World Economic Forum (WEF) announced the world's top 100 major artists, business leaders, social entrepreneurs, tech-pioneers, thinkers and policymakers. All of them are under 40 and they are recognized as young global leaders (YGL)

For Nino, it all began with purchasing two cows in 2007, when the now-experienced farmer began her business project alongside partner and friend Beso Babunashvili. The two partners had submitted an application to the Millennium Challenge project and received 125,000 Dollars for their project. Nino then moved from Tbilisi to **Akhaltsikhe** and opened a farm. The business proved very successful.



Mother of two, Nino is now Deputy Director of the Georgian Business Zone (GBZ) and CEO of the Georgian Farmers Association. She currently has two main interests of work – agricultural soil and cow farming. She is adept at breeding cows, making cheese and setting up apple orchards and other vegetation. The Georgian Farmers Association - founded by her alongside like-minded people - works to support individuals involved with farms. She also serves as Director of British Petroleum programs in Akhaltsikhe, where the international energy giant issues grants for local business projects.

Nino was awarded the Woman Entrepreneur of the Year title at the first national business awards organised by the Economy Ministry and the Investment Agency in 2011. She is the first female leader in Georgia to represent 'Invest for the Future', the organisation operating under the auspices of the former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton. Besides agriculture, Nino is involved in other business projects. She founded 'Take Away' coffee spots in 2005 and is now owner of a vast coffee and tea network, supplying restaurants.

YGL members are requested to cooperate with each other for 5 years to participate in resolving the world's sharpest problems and challenges. "Young global leaders represent the best samples in their generation and they promote creating a new model of sustainable innovation", John Dutton WEF Director said. "The Forum of Young Global Leaders is a special community with more than 90 talented young leaders. Bold and action-oriented people assume this obligation to spend their time and talent to make the world better."

"NEWCASTLES" IN PHOTOS

We thought readers might enjoy these photos that feature people, places and events in some of our different "Newcastles"



Above and below: The annual Gaudiwurm Parade in Neuburg an der Donau (Germany) recently



Above: Thulani Phukathi of Newcastle, South Africa who plans to lead his Zulu traditional dance group to Akhalsikhe in June for the castle festival (see below)



Right - To celebrate their 75th anniversary, the Cellars of the City of Neuchâtel have created a special vintage known as the "Cuvée de la charte 1214", in tune with the 800th anniversary of the franchise charter.



Left - all the fun of the "Winter Festival" in Newcastle, South Africa



Above - the season is arriving for the series of Broad Street "cruise-ins" of classic cars in New Castle, Indiana, USA



Above - the Merchants House/Mayor's Yard in Nyborg, Denmark - historical museum going back 400 years built by Mayor Mads Lerche.



New Castle, Pennsylvania, USA - the "Fireworks Capital of America" !



It'll be summer soon in Jaunpils, Latvia (left)



Our good friend Robert Dulfer in Nove Hradý (Czech Republic), on transportation duties



Getting about in Kota Bharu, Malaysia



The colourful Masopust carnival took place again in Nove Hradý (Czech Republic) recently

Focus on Kota Bharu's Ramadan Festival

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar - one of the Five Pillars in Islam and the most sacred month in the Islamic calendar for Muslims, when the Koran (the Holy Book) was revealed. While fasting from dawn until sunset Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, improvement and increased devotion and worship.

The **Kota Bharu** (Malaysia) Ramadan Festival is an annual programme started in 1995. Organised by the City Council with a joint committee from various government bodies and agencies in Kota Bharu. Ramadan Festival is a time of giving, of charity, of sharing, of remembering those in need and reaching out. People from every late afternoon before sunset to break the fast and for prayers and other religious and community activities.

The sharing and caring concept of the Kota Bharu Ramadan Festival attracts generous contributions from individuals and corporate leaders, and has eased the financial burden on the city for organising the festival. The best thing about the festival is you don't have to pay anything to join the programme. The food and drink for breaking the fast is free. Everyone can attend and enjoy all the facilities provided at no charge.



Ducal Power and True Faith; Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Neuburg

The Protestant Reformation was the 16th-century religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered Catholic Europe, setting in place the structures and beliefs that would define the continent in the modern era. In northern and central Europe, reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and Henry VIII challenged papal authority and questioned the Catholic Church's ability to define Christian practice. They argued for a religious and political redistribution of power into the hands of Bible and to pastors and princes. The disruption triggered wars, persecutions and the so-called Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church's delayed but forceful response to the Protestants.

The Reformation is usually accepted as starting in 1517 on the issue of Martin Luther's "95 theses".



There are events across Europe this year to mark this 500th anniversary.

In **Neuburg an der Donau** the anniversary offers an opportunity to get to know about the frequent changes of faith in Pfalz-Neuburg at authentic locations. An extensive special exhibition at the Palace, Fürstengang and Hofkirche will be on display from July 15 to November 5, 2017. Usually closed locations will be accessible during the exposition.

This large cultural and historical exhibition, hosted by Neuburg and Bavaria, will offer insight into "Ducal Power and True Faith – Reformation and Counter-Reformation". It is the only exhibition in Luther's commemorative year 2017 which covers not only the Evangelical epoch, but also addresses the changing, in parts dramatic, religious history of Pfalz-Neuburg from the 16th to the early 18th century.



As part of the programme dedicated to the Luther Commemorative Year 2017, the exhibition will be supported by the federal Commission for Culture and Media in Berlin, the Bavarian Culture Foundation, the district Neuburg-Schrobenhausen, the Bishopric of Augsburg and also the Evangelical Church of Bavaria. The exhibition's patron is the Bavarian Minister President, Horst Seehofer.

Neuburg-upon-Danube was the capital of the former Principality of Pfalz-Neuburg from 1505 to 1806. As an authentic location of religious conversion, the town also fulfills the ideal situational requirements for an extensive special exposition: The chapel of the former palace is the oldest church in Germany built for the purpose of protestant worship. The wall-paintings and ceiling-murals from Hans Bocksberger the Elder date from 1543 and are of high relevancy both historical and cultural. The theological programme was commissioned by Count Palatine Ottheinrich and designed by Andreas Osiander. After complete renovation, the chapel and its frescoes has been shining in new splendour since the spring of 2016.



The Principality of Pfalz-Neuburg was Protestant from 1543 to 1615 with only a small break from 1546 to 1550. Here, Count Palatine Philipp-Ludwig, second successor of Ottheinrich, developed a Protestant model state – in constant confrontation with Roman Catholic Bavaria. After the death of his father and ascension to power, Philipp-Ludwig's oldest son, Count-Palatine Wolfgang Wilhelm, launched the Counter-Reformation in 1614. As a result, the Hofkirche – Neuburg's principal Protestant church, originally designed as the counterpart of the Roman Catholic St. Michael's church in Munich – was returned to the Jesuit order. It was consecrated in 1618 as the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary and decorated with altar pieces of Peter Paul Rubens.



For more information contact Tourist-Information Neuburg or www.fuerstenmacht.de

YOUTH

Young people from **Jaunpils, Latvia** have been participating in a creative workshop project “Smart, even smarter: understand the UN Sustainable Development Goals together” Secondary school students worked together to create a wooden jigsaw puzzle, representing each of the UN goals for sustainable development in the environmental, economic and social spheres.



Ligita Gintere, the mayor of Jaunpils municipality (back row, 3rd from left) said “quality education and public information are crucial to successfully promote sustainable change, which contributes to the well-being of society. This was an amazingly creative but informal way for young people to learn how the changes of today will affect us for the future”.



YOUNG PEOPLE WILL HELP LINKS BETWEEN CITIES

Two young people from **Neuchâtel** will visit **Shinshiro** for one year in a unique opportunity to discover Japan. As part of the Neuchâtel du Monde Alliance (“Newcastles of the World”), the City of Neuchâtel will send two students for one year each, one beginning this summer and the other next summer.



The purpose is for the young people, aged 20 to 25, to experience the cultural heritage of the city of Shinshiro and the country of Japan and to develop links between the two cities, especially in the fields of democratic institutions and practices, culture and education. The young people will link up with local youth, collaborate with English teachers in high school and participate in the work of the committee responsible for setting up the summit of the Alliance cities in 2018 in Japan – and contributing ideas for next one planned for 2020 which will be in Neuchâtel. The link builds upon the already strong relationship between these two founder member cities of the alliance.

In our next newsletter we will give information about the two young people – and maybe we can ask them to contribute a regular article in future newsletters and for our social media?



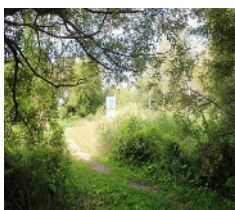
Young people in **Nyborg Municipality, Denmark** are to have a new “youth house” which will serve as a gathering place and shelter where young people between 15 and 25 can come and be themselves without an adult looking over their shoulder. The Youth House is run by the Youth Council's Board of Directors, which will be responsible for ensuring that actions are in line with the Youth Council's visions. “I am extremely pleased that the politicians have listened so much to us and allowed us to start a Youth House” said Stefan Dølby, President of the Youth Council.

Through activities in the Youth House, young people will be able to experience cultural offers that have not previously been part of Nyborg's youth life - concerts, poetry slam, political debates, movie nights, etc. and a great deal of focus on socializing and reaching a wide audience. “We hope that the young people will benefit from this amazing opportunity they have now, creating a more active youth life in the municipality of Nyborg,” said Mayor Kenneth Muhs.

New Castle High School, Indiana gathered in the City Council chambers to participate in the annual “Mayor for a Day” programme. Sponsored by the New Castle Breakfast Optimist Club, the aim is to help students gain a greater understanding of how city government works and provide them with a hands-on learning experience. Students enrolled in government class drew names from to determine which employee they would be shadowing for the day. In the photo, NCHS senior Johnny Luna receives help as he dresses as a New Castle firefighter. Luna partnered Monday with Fire Department Chief Mark Boatright for Mayor for a Day.



Students in art and construction classes at **Clarke High School, Newcastle, Canada** have shared their time and talents with a local nature group. The advisory committee of volunteers appointed by the municipality of Clarington to oversee the Samuel Wilmot Nature Area in Newcastle had been approached last fall by the parent council at Clarke to see how Clarke students might be able to contribute to the work of the committee. It was suggested that the waste receptacles used throughout the nature area could be painted with nature themes. The municipality provided 26 new 45 gallon drums and the arts students did the rest. The second project involved students in the Grade 9 Integrated Technology and Grade 10 Construction classes. They produced 15 new birdhouses and 5 butterfly houses installed in the Nature Area in time for the nesting season - in doing so, supporting the Monarch Butterfly Pledge by Mayor Adrian Foster.



THE JOY OF SPRINGTIME

March and April saw the annual Shinshiro City Cherry Blossom Festival in Sakurabuchi Park, It's a designated Nature Park, that takes its name from its avenues lined with cherry blossoms ("sakura") and its deep pools of water (the "buchi" in the park's name) and features some of the most outstanding scenery in the Aichi prefecture in Japan. The park is famed for its blooming cherry blossoms that seem to dye pink the banks of the Toyokawa river that meanders through the park's centre. Many community events are held during the Cherry Blossom Festival.



We asked other Newcastles in the northern hemisphere to share with us their photographs of spring time, and here we show a few of them.



Neuchâtel, Switzerland



Nyborg, Denmark



Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom



Nove Hradý, Czech Republic



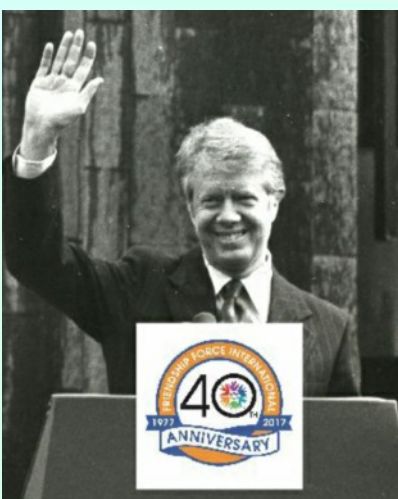
Newcastle-under-Lyme, United Kingdom



Left: Jitka and Martina from the tourism and culture information centre in **Nové Hradý** (our Newcastle in South Bohemia, Czech Republic) did a great job promoting their town recently at the big travel expo in České Budějovice.



Left: The Mayor of **Akhalsikhe** City Hall Vladimer Zedginidze (3rd from the left) and other city representatives attended the 16th Azerbaijan International Travel and Tourism Fair, where 272 companies from 22 countries offered a variety of destinations, focusing on airlines, hotel chains and other tourist services. Among the participants there were companies from Azerbaijan, Italy & Switzerland.



Newcastle upon Tyne has been celebrating a very special anniversary with presentations and an exhibition in the city library. Forty years ago, on May 4th 1977, US President Jimmy Carter visited Newcastle, was given honorary Freedom of the City, announced the "twinning" of Newcastle with his home city of Atlanta, Georgia and launched the first-ever "Friendship Force" exchange in the world - between citizens of the cities. The Friendship Force is about staying in the homes of people of similar interests in the chosen exchange city. This is a little like Shinshiro City's idea for visits between Newcastles and could be the basis for this initiative - watch this space!

NEW HOTEL TO BE BUILT IN NEUBURG AN DER DONAU

There has been a big increase in overnight stays by visitors to **Neuburg an der Donau**, Germany in the past 10 years, from 50,000 to almost 100,000. So the building of a new hotel for the town is very welcome. The hotel will cost 5.6 million Euros to construct and provide capacity for 116 guests. It's being developed by the Bavarian Machinery Cooperative and private investor Alfred Bircks on a site to the west of the centre of Neuburg, and it's expected to be open by August of next year.

Mayor Bernhard Gmehling (pictured 4th from the right) welcomed this important development for the town and, together with representatives of public life, the builder, the architect and the future hotel manageress, cut the turf on the site so work could start.



FLOODS IN NEWCASTLE, SOUTH AFRICA

Many homes were flooded in February in **Newcastle, South Africa** during exceptional rainfall from the hills in February. Mayor Nkosi said "In response to the flooding disaster currently in Newcastle and surrounding areas, the Disaster Management team was quickly on the ground to assist the community during the difficult times". Areas affected worst in Newcastle were Lennoxton, Paradise and Siyahhlala Informal Settlement, D96 as well as Madadeni Section 3 and Osizweni where two houses were completely destroyed.

The displaced communities that were evacuated in Newcastle were accommodated in community halls and schools. A soup kitchen was quickly activated and relief materials distributed to the affected communities - sandbags, mattresses, blankets, tents and plastic sheets. Fortunately no fatalities or serious injuries took place.



The Iron Curtain Open Air Museum started out as a private museum on the history of the Czech - Austrian border in 1918, when the Czechoslovak Republic was split from Austria and became an independent state. When its creator died, he left the exhibition and all its objects and documents to the Town of **Nové Hradý**. This open air museum is now located at the former border crossing between the Czech Republic and Austria, about a kilometre out of town. Most of the original museum exhibitions have been rebuilt and some things added, including a guard house.

In the years 1992 - 2003 Marek Radomil developed the museum with the help of his friends on his own land. The inspiration came from his travels along the Czech Republic, especially along the streets, where parts of the old wire-cut from the former Iron Curtain still stand out. The first building was an original wire barricade. Soon a strip of typical farmland screen wall was taken. The exhibition is complemented by frontier milestones, a watchtower and armoured locks.

REFUGEE FAMILY REBUILDING THEIR LIVES IN NEWCASTLE, CANADA

Last March the Doughouz family, Syrian refugees, arrived in Newcastle, Ontario, Canada. While dad Ahmed had some English skills when he came over, he was not confident enough with his ability to speak the language to carry on a conversation. Now he can. Though Ahmed and Lina are not fully fluent in English yet, they are able to answer questions and get their points across. Lina is taking English classes three times a week and now helps her husband with the language. Their three young daughters converse very easily in both languages - English and Arabic.

This is where the sponsorship programme in Canada is so vital. Sponsors invest so much into their refugee families, making them feel at home, familiarizing them with what their adopted country has to offer.

When asked what his goals are for the coming year, Ahmed said he hopes his work is going well and he hopes to learn more English. Ahmed recently began his own renovation company, and has become a bread-winner again. Well done to them and to our friends in Newcastle, Canada for their hospitality and support. Would that every country and every community were so welcoming.



BATTLING IT OUT AT SHINSHIRO !

During the Sengoku period (1482-1573), the Takeda family was one of the strongest clans in Japan, known in particular for its successful cavalry charges. Yet in 1575, it found itself up against something that rendered it powerless — the new western technology of firearms.

In early July that year, allies of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu attacked and defeated Takeda Katsuyori's forces, which had besieged Nagashino castle. The Battle of Shitaragahara, also known as the Battle of Nagashino, became recognized as a turning point for Japanese warfare because of Oda's effective use of guns. It was the first battle for which firearms played a major role in victory.

Each year, locals of **Shinshiro** in Aichi Prefecture commemorate this famous event with the Shitaragahara Battlefield Festival, which takes place at the original site.

After a memorial service dedicated to those who died in battle, visitors enjoy various performances, including a drumming show and a children's samurai costume parade. The highlight of the festival is always a demonstration by men, dressed in period costume, using authentic matchlock guns, just as Oda's forces did more than 400 years ago. Other attractions include stalls selling special foods and locally made miscellaneous goods.

The site of former Nagashino castle was protected as a National Historic Landmark in 1929, the first time a former castle site had received such protection. Located on a fork of two rivers, all that remains of the castle today are remnants of moats and some stonework, but the story is told in the local heritage centre museum.



CIRCUS PIONEER COULD PUT NEWCASTLE ON THE MAP



This year is the 270th anniversary of the birth of circus pioneer Philip Astley of Newcastle-under-Lyme, United Kingdom. Astley created the first 42 feet diameter circus ring – which is the standard still used today all over the world – and he introduced rope walkers, acrobats and clowns alongside his equestrian shows. He built 19 amphitheatres across the UK and in Paris.

Illusionist Andrew Van Buren recently travelled to the European Parliament to promote Astley and Newcastle. He has long campaigned to ensure Astley is given the credit he deserves in his home town. He believes a heritage trail and a permanent statue to Astley would help put Newcastle on the map.

Andrew said “When you think of what William Shakespeare has done for Stratford upon Avon, then what can Philip Astley do for Newcastle under Lyme - Astley is our Shakespeare.” Yet he is buried in a grave in Paris that no longer bears his name – while many in his home town of Newcastle would be hard pushed to say who he was.

Nominated by the public, 25 of the **Newcastle upon Tyne** area's most inspiring people from the past 60 years have been honoured with a bronze pavement plaque installed on one of the city's most important visitor sites – the Quayside, for a Hollywood-style ‘walk of fame’. These include world-famous singer Sting; the latest nominees include actor Tim Healy, best known for television series “Auf Wiedersehen”, and singer Brian Johnson known for his work with rock band AC/DC and a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.



Friday 30 June brings the celebration day of Saint Shalva Akhaltsikheli, based at the magnificent Rabati fortress in **Akhaltshikhe**, Georgia - we will be there and report in full next time!



Danehof, the famous castle festival in **Nyborg**, Denmark, takes place on the first weekend of July. The medieval tournament is held at the town square where lances are shattered against shields while horses at full gallop whirl sawdust into the air. Thousands enjoy this authentic experience, which takes place on the original tournament arena from the 1500s, as well as stalls and a wonderful food market.

NEWCASTLE - AUSTRALIA'S SURFING "CAPITAL"

Brazilian Yago Dora claim his first World Surf League title as he triumphed over countryman Jess Mendes in the final of Surfest 2017 in **Newcastle, Australia**. Dora beat Australian Mitch Coleborn and Mendes defeated American Ian Crane in the semi-finals. Local surfer Ryan Callinan won three consecutive heats to raise hopes of a first male Newcastle winner at Surfest before going out in the round of 16 to 2012 winner, Brazilian Willian Cardoso.

Frenchwoman Johanne Defay also took her first Surfest title. The No.2 seed, controlled the women's final against New Zealander Paige Hareb.

SPORT



The Battlefields Marathon, which starts in **Newcastle, South Africa**, was run for the 40th time in March. This historic run takes in some of the sites of battles leading up to the famous Battle of Majuba, a major deciding battle of the Anglo-Boer War. Fought on 27 February 1881 Majuba became a legend in South African military history. Schuinshoogte was the site of a one-day battle on 8 February 1881, when the British under General Colley found themselves surrounded by the Boers at the top of the hill. Half marathon, 10 kilometre and fun run entries.



Happier times for football fans in **Newcastle upon Tyne** where last year's disappointment at being relegated has been replaced by the celebration at winning promotion immediately back to the Premier League. Much of the success is put down to the famous coach/manager Rafa Benitez, former manager of Real Madrid and before that Inter Milan and Liverpool. But will he stay? - that's the big question. Newcastle can be a difficult club, with a controversial owner. Fingers crossed.



Hundreds of anglers from around **South Africa** converged on Newcastle for the first-ever overnight angling competition at Chelmsford Dam (what a photo! - courtesy of the Newcastle Advertiser). Endumeni Angling Club (EAC) is a sports organisation, which has a team of dedicated anglers from all cultural backgrounds who compete under the umbrella of the Natal Fresh Waters Angling Association and will use the competition to promote the club and raise funds to finance its operations during the season.

The most eagerly-awaited festival for kite lovers returns this year from August 24 to August 26. The Kelantan International Kite Festival will be held at Geting Beach, Tumpat, close to **Kota Bharu** (our Newcastle in Malaysia), capital city of Kelantan. Participants from all over Malaysia as well as from Australia, Japan, China, India, Indonesia, and South Korea are already named to join the event. Beside various types of competition involving several kind of kites including the famous giant Wau Bulan kite, local favourite past times like the beating of Giant Drum The Rebana Ubi, The Dikir Barat and Shadow puppet show will be playing live throughout the festival.



Anne Tipsmark Bouchet and Lene Friis from **Nyborg** table tennis club won gold in both team and doubles age categories at the recent Danish national veterans' table tennis championships. Anne also won bronze in the singles.



The #ICHOOSE2BEACTIVE campaign is an initiative by the Department of Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation of KwaZulu Natal, **South Africa** with the aim to provide an opportunity to all South Africans to be actively involved by participating in recreational activities that will improve their health and well-being, create livable communities and promote social cohesion, drive personal benefits of improving self-esteem and improve on social integration, developing community and cultural identity. With that in mind, **Newcastle Municipality** worked with the Department and Amajuba District to put on an exciting healthy lifestyle event in April at Phelandaba Stadium in Madadeni. Activities for the day included a 1km and 3km walk, mass aerobics, exhibitions, wheelchair 3 on 3 basketball, volleyball, netball, senior citizens golden games, indigenous games and live performances from Lvovo, DJ Siyanda and other local artists.

The cabinet of KwaZulu-Natal is also introducing 'Active Fridays' as an initiative to curb the increased sedentary lifestyle. The issue of obesity as one of the challenges amongst women in South Africa - 3% of South Africans women over the age of 15 being obese and 42% of urban women obese. Exercise alone is not enough. Good nutrition is also an important part of a healthy lifestyle.



YOUR NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD CONTACTS

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Mayor (Oberbürgermeister), **Neuburg an der Donau** – Dr Bernhard Gmehling, Stadt Neuburg an der Donau, Amalienstraße A 54 86633 Neuburg an der Donau, Germany bernhard.gmehling@neuburg-donau.de <http://www.neuburg-donau.de>. Newcastle of the World contact – Marieluise Kühnl, Head of Tourism, email: marieluise.kuehnl@neuburg-donau.de; also former councillor Walter Friemel, email: walter@friemel.net.

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Lord Mayor of **Newcastle upon Tyne** (civic head) – Councillor Hazel Stephenson, lord.mayor@newcastle.gov.uk, Newcastle City Council, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne NE99 2BN, United Kingdom. Leader of the Council (political leader): Councillor Nick Forbes. nick.forbes@newcastle.gov.uk. Chief Executive: Pat Richie, pat.richie@newcastle.gov.uk. Newcastle of the World contact – Councillor David Faulkner david.faulkner@newcastle.gov.uk tel 00 44 (0)191 284 5662

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Lord Mayor, **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia** – Nuatali Nelmes, The City of Newcastle, City Administration Centre, 282 King Street, Newcastle NSW 2300, PO Box 489, Newcastle 2300, Australia; Phone 02 4974 2000; lordmayor@ncc.nsw.gov.au; Head of Lord Mayor's Office: Katie Porritt: kporritt@ncc.nsw.gov.au; Newcastle of the World contact: Bob Cook; bobcooknewcastle@gmail.com

Mayor (“Gamblebi” or Governor) of **Akhalsikhe** Municipality, Georgia: Vladimer Zedginidze vovazedginidze@gmail.com; c/o Akhalsikhe Municipality, Merab Kostava str. # 18, Akhalsikhe, 0800, Georgia, Email:akhalsikhecithall@gmail.com; Newcastle of the World contacts Levan Mikaberidze, Akhalsikhe Municipality; email levani@hotmail.co.uk

Mayor of **New Castle, Indiana, USA** – Greg York: greg-york@cityofnewcastle.net; PA: Kendra Kennedy: kendra-kennedy@cityofnewcastle.net; Newcastle of the World contact: Beverly Matthews, Chief Executive, Henry County Community Foundation: beverly@henrycountycf.org

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President, **Kota Bharu** Municipal Council Islamic City, Malaysia – Tuan Haji Fauzi bin Mat, Jalan Hospital, 15000 Kota Bharu., Kelantan Darul Naim, Malaysia. <http://www.mpkb.gov.my>; Newcastle of the World contact – Azman Mohddaham; azmohdaham@yahoo.com

TANYA'S THINKING ABOUT A POLITICAL CAREER!

Tanya Irwin from **Newcastle, Ontario, Canada** was one of 330 young women from across Canada in the House of Commons on International Woman's Day on 8th March.

They were in the capital Ottawa to learn what it would be like to be an MP. The women were participating in a programme called Daughters of the Vote. This event was organized by Equal Voice, a group dedicated to encouraging Canadian women to run for political office. Daughters of the Vote was held to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the first voting rights in Canada for women.



During the three day event Tanya said she listened to a number of MPs and ministers speaking on a range of issues from gender equality, political representation and getting involved in politics. Delegates heard from each federal party leader as well as former prime minister Kim Campbell.

Delegates spoke of their personal experiences of being a young Muslim woman in Canada, living in poverty and being transgender and living in Canada, Irwin said. Opportunities for delegates to share their vision of Canada came up during the event, according to Irwin. Her vision includes electoral reform, mitigating climate change, indigenous reconciliation and equality - not just gender equality.

The Newcastle native is currently pursuing a Master's degree in international affairs at Carleton University in Ottawa. She sees running for political office in the future.

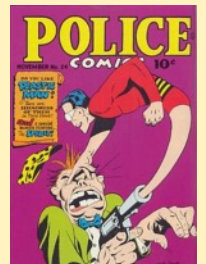
Nové Hradý's music festival with celebrated violinist Jaroslav Svěcený takes place from 27 July to 2nd August with 6 concerts, one in the Romany church just across the border in Austria, one in the church of Dobrá Voda and the others in the Buquoy chateau.



"Coming of age" in Japan at 25 years - young people gather to celebrate in **Shinshiro City**



One of the most interesting people to come from **New Castle, Pennsylvania** is Jack Cole, a celebrated illustrator and cartoonist in the golden era of comic books. He was best known for creating the comic superhero "Plastic Man" - and also interesting for cartoons that were published in Playboy magazine! Cole later created his own satiric, Spirit-style hero, Midnight, for Smash Comics. He died in 1958 at the age of only 43, but was posthumously inducted into the comic book industry's Hall of Fame in 1991.



In 1998 the Mayor of Shinshiro in Japan took the initiative to invite representatives of seven "Newcastles" to his city. With others, they have continued to meet every two years – in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in 2000, USA (Indiana/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, Nové Hradý in the Czech Republic (2014) and Newcastle, Ontario, Canada in 2016.

ABOUT NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD

The aim of the Newcastles alliance is to foster friendship and collaboration, and to share and enjoy each others' heritage and culture. Each gathering has taken a discussion theme to ensure practical, usable outcomes, also involving our young people.

Pictured here left to right above and across rows: Nové Hradý, Czech Republic; Neuchâtel, Switzerland; Nové Zámky, Slovakia; Nyborg, Denmark; Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom; Jaunpils, Latvia; New Castle, Pennsylvania, USA; New Castle, Indiana, USA; Neuburg an der Donau, Germany; Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia; Shinshiro City, Japan; Newcastle-under-Lyme, United Kingdom; Newcastle, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa; Newcastle, Clarington, Ontario, Canada; Kota Bharu, Malaysia; Akhaltsikhe, Republic of Georgia.

