



WE SEND GOOD WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR TO OUR "NEWCASTLES" AROUND THE WORLD !



SHINSHIRO WELCOMES YOUNG PEOPLE FROM OTHER NEWCASTLES

Shinshiro City, Japan invited youth delegates from other Alliance members as part of the tenth birthday celebrations of its own youth council. To commemorate this special anniversary, eight young people from six other countries from the Alliance were hosted for a week in early November, and had a truly memorable experience. There was a welcome party, visits to local schools, a meeting with the Mayor, cultural activities, sightseeing in the city and its surrounds, an excursion to Nagoya and several working sessions with representatives of the Shinshiro Youth Council where they shared experience and ideas.

The visitors gave presentations about their cities, and took part in a feedback session about the Newcastles of the World conference in Jaunpils, Latvia on Shinshiro's "Newcastles of the World Day", 8 November.

There are more photos from the visit on page 3 of this newsletter. Congratulations to the Shinshiro Youth Council on its tenth anniversary, and very many thanks to the city of Shinshiro for its generosity and hospitality.



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CONTACT US WITH NEWS FOR THE NEXT EDITION BY 15 FEBRUARY 2026
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PEOPLE

Many congratulations to Hiroyuki Shimoe who has been re-elected as Mayor of **Shinshiro**, our "Newcastle" in Japan, and was welcomed back to City Hall by the staff on the first day of his new term, when the inauguration ceremony was held.

The key policies for his second term are

1. Fiscal and administrative reform, with responsibility for the future.
2. A city where people can continue to live with peace of mind.
3. A city that protects the safety of its citizens.
4. A city that nurtures a love for the hometown, where the next generation can have hope and dreams.
5. A vibrant and energetic city that attracts people



The Lord Mayor of **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia**, Ross Kerridge (*left*), has been diagnosed with a serious medical condition that requires ongoing treatment and will be taking a leave of absence from his duties as Lord Mayor until early 2026. We wish him well for his treatment and recovery.

During this period, Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Charlotte McCabe (*right*) will assume the responsibilities of Lord Mayor.



Former Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes (*left*) has been honoured with the prestigious Emeritus Mayor Award by Local Government New South Wales in recognition of her outstanding service to Newcastle and the broader local government sector.



Julie Baird (*left*), the Director of **Newcastle Museum**, is to take the reins of one of Australia's peak cultural bodies



We are sorry to have to share the news of the passing of our friend Leo Blindenbach (*see right*) of **Newcastle, Ontario, Canada**, who bravely fought a long battle with cancer.

Congratulations to Varlam Tsiklauri (*left*), the new Mayor of the Municipality of **Akhaltzikhe**, our "Newcastle" in the Republic of Georgia.

Mr Tsiklauri, of the "Georgian Dream" party, has a background in television and journalism.



after being named President of the Australian Museums and Galleries Association. It is a landmark achievement for Ms Baird, who becomes the first person from a Local Government-funded museum to be elected to the top job of the national council. She is also the first President from a regional area, who works outside a state or federal capital.

Leo spent his final days at Marigold Hospice Care, the very place he devoted so much time, passion, and heart to bringing to life (*see page 11*).

Leo's work in the community was recognised more widely.

He received the Ontario Seniors Achievement Award in 2021 and a Paul Harris Fellowship Award in 2024, both celebrating his meaningful contributions to many aspects of life in his community. We remember Leo as a key member of the organising committee for the 2016 Newcastle's of the World conference in his own town.

SHINSHIRO CELEBRATES !



In October, **Shinshiro** City, our “Newcastle in Japan”, marked its 20th anniversary of city status, and a commemorative ceremony was held at the Shinshiro Cultural Hall. A thousand people attended the event, including members of the National Diet and the Governor of Aichi Prefecture.

The ceremony featured a performance by the Nagashino Jin-daiko (a traditional Japanese drum group from Shinshiro), a performance by a young calligrapher from Shinshiro, a talk show by the nationally-famous comedian and Shinshiro native, Murakami from the comedy duo Magical Lovely, and a chorus of the song created to celebrate the 20th anniversary. Additionally, three commemorative videos for this anniversary of Shinshiro’s city status have been uploaded to YouTube, in Japanese only. Please be sure to check them out.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPi_yVUVAjc&list=PL0TJ8eLZUzbVSSVOBtFOhFAH8v76lGdj



The Tominaga Shrine Festival is held in **Shinshiro**, our “Newcastle” in Japan, for three days in October every year. This Festival starts with Noh and Kyogen — traditional performing arts that take place on a Noh stage. A procession of floats and portable shrines where divine spirits reside goes through the shrine parishioner district. It's followed by hand-held fireworks, in which flames shoot out of hand-held bamboo tubes.



Floats that are beautifully decorated to reenact Japanese myths are towed around the town by the shrine parishioners. Each float is surrounded by the festival music composed of Taiko drums and flutes that local leaders play. You can experience a traditional festival like the ones Japanese people held for the gods long ago.

More photos from the international youth gathering



NEUCHÂTEL IS IN THE CHRISTMAS MOOD !



Starting Friday, November 28, the City of **Neuchâtel**, our “Newcastle” in Switzerland, launched its traditional Christmas festivities in the city centre and surrounding villages, with plenty of new features. They included a Christmas market in the English Garden and a Santa's Village on Chaumont Hill, where young and old alike can enjoy a variety of activities (sledding, pony rides, and of course, seeing the real Santa Claus!).

The City also installed its traditional 20-meter-high Christmas tree, cut down in the forests of Neuchâtel.



Construction of a new youth hostel in **Neuchâtel** is about to begin. By summer 2027, around one hundred beds will be available for festival-goers, families, and backpackers.

The Sablons youth hostel, just steps from the train station, is being built in a converted school building. It will breathe new life into tourism, for lovers of culture (Festi'neuch, NIFFF, museums and more) and nature: lake, forests, the Ermitage valley and more.



In **Neuchâtel** a unique new exhibition space is taking shape in a former prison.

Opening its doors on December 18th, the Tower of Fantasy will be an exhibition space dedicated to fantasy worlds, under the direction of Diane Launier (*left*)



The very first exhibition, "The Worlds of John Howe," is devoted to the work of the illustrator of J.R.R. Tolkien's books and films. The work is nearing completion, including the installation of an aerial walkway.



The annual Chocolatissimo, the **Neuchâtel** (Switzerland) chocolate festival, has completed its 12th edition. It was another fantastic week for the city that is the home of Suchard and a great chocolate tradition - especially as this year the festival was dedicated to the theme of fantasy. Winged dragons, elves, magical creatures, all in chocolate: the magical imagination took possession of the Hôtel de Ville. Nearly 10,000 people – families, classes, the curious, gourmets and regulars – took advantage of this enchanted week to discover new flavours, taste all kinds of delicacies and admire the creations of the region's young talents.



They are supported in their commitment by the "Vieilles gloires", retired chocolatier craftsmen who are loyal to the event.

CHRISTMAS TIME IN NEUBURG AN DER DONAU



The Karlsplatz in Neuburg's historic Old Town, considered the heart of the Upper town and called one of Germany's most beautiful squares, hosts the city's Christkindlmarkt on the second and third Advent weekends. This market, with over 30 years of tradition, features 26 stalls offering Christmas ornaments, decorations, wool products, and jewellery.

The city's tourist-information organises the "Living Christmas Workshop" in the historic town hall, where local artisans display and sell their crafts. Visitors can also enjoy music, singing performances, and a magical light display. Just a few meters away, Neuburg Castle offers more holiday treats, handcrafted gifts, and ceramics. The market is open from December 5–7 and 12–14, with free admission.

A special exhibition at Neuburg Castle runs from 6 December 2025 – 1 March 2026 on the theme of 'Marriage ties – (powerlessness) of women?' The exhibition focuses on the fate of Margarethe of Brandenburg (1410-1465). The story of the Zollern princess Margarethe is told at the historic site where, after the death of her husband, she took her fate into her own hands and ultimately married her steward without permission. Such a marriage to an unequal partner was not intended for daughters of the high nobility and had massive consequences. Margarethe succeeded in doing what others were denied: her niece Barbara had to pay dearly for attempting to marry beneath her station – with years of harsh imprisonment. The largely unknown subject of such unauthorised marriages in the late Middle Ages raises surprisingly topical questions about today's female role models and ideals of beauty. There is an extensive and interesting supporting programme with lectures, activities and themed tours. There are also programme items for children and families.



We have written before about the musical link between **Neuburg** and **Shinshiro, Japan** through the German clarinet and saxophone player Markus Haninger. Markus was in Shinshiro again recently to perform in two concerts and to give lessons. He is pictured, left, with Mayor Hiroyuki Shimoe.



Alex Fitzek of the Cap-Creative advertising agency in **Neuburg an der Donau** has been working on an interview feature for a magazine that she and her colleagues edit called "HALLO Neuburg" on the theme of Christmas in different towns and cities of our Alliance. Thanks to those who have contributed information about the different seasonal traditions around our Alliance.

But who is this person pictured right?

Check it out on <https://hallo-neuburg.de/2025/11/28/weihnachten-in-den-neuburgs-der-welt/>



"Christmas is just around the corner ... and the international alliance of cities called Neuburg is looking forward to the festive season and its own exciting and cozy pre-Christmas season, which makes every "Neuburg Christmas" in this Newcastle family so unique and unforgettable. What are the traditions of "your" Neuburg? We asked our friends in various Neuburgs of the Alliance. And we are very happy that David Faulkner from Newcastle upon Tyne (England), Yoshimi Hoyama from Shinshiro (Japan), Ligita Gintere from Jaunpils (Latvia), Thulani Phakathi from Newcastle (South Africa) and Damien Vaucher from Neuchâtel (Switzerland) share their thoughts and feelings for their Christmas season with us in HALLO Neuburg."

November in **Jaunpils**, and throughout Latvia, has passed in a deeply patriotic atmosphere.

11 November is the Day of Remembrance for Soldiers fallen for Latvia's Independence, a day that especially commemorates the Latvian Army's victory over Bermond's forces on 11 November 1919. On this evening, Latvians join in torchlight processions across the country to honour the memory of the freedom fighters.

Every year, Jaunpils also holds this light-filled march from the school to the castle square. In the castle square, the participants of the procession are welcomed by bonfires, warm tea, and slices of rye bread with honey.

At **Jaunpils** Elementary School, a concert by the children was held in honour of the national holiday. The children sang, danced, played music, and recited poetry, celebrating the joy of living in a free country.

CELEBRATING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY



During the celebration, residents who have earned recognition for their meaningful contributions to the community were honoured—whether through their work for the development of Jaunpils and Viesati parishes, their conscientious and exemplary fulfilment of professional duties, or their active involvement in public life.

NOVEMBER - A SPECIAL MONTH IN JAUNPILS



The Freedom Procession



18 November is a public holiday in Latvia, marking the anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia. This year, the nation celebrated its 107th birthday.

On the eve of the holiday, Saturday, 15 November, the people of **Jaunpils** gathered in the great hall of the castle to spend time together and celebrate the national holiday with a festive event.



Varlam Tsiklauri (*left in photo*), the Mayor of the Municipality of **Akhaltzikhe**, our "Newcastle" in the Republic of Georgia, together with the Chairman of the City Council Saba Kbilashvili, visited the annual exhibition at Akhaltzikhe Art School. The exhibition features wonderful paintings, crafts, porcelain, clay, glass and wood works by students and teachers. The event was attended by other local government representatives, pupils' parents and citizens interested in art.

In the current academic year, Akhaltzikhe Art School has an amazing total of 425 students. The school offers a diverse curriculum. Here, they master drawing, painting, mosaic, modelling, applied art for free. Also, working on composition, sculpture, enamel and ceramics.



NOVÉ HRADY'S WONDERFUL GUITAR FESTIVAL

The ninth South Bohemia Guitar Festival has taken place in Nové Hradý, our “Newcastle” in the Czech Republic. It was another astounding event for such a small town, which is why we are giving it full page coverage in this edition.



Festival organiser, guitarist, teacher, and dramaturgist, Karolína Vobořilová, reports:

“The festival originally started “just like that,” incidentally – for ten children from the Trhové Sviny Primary Art School and with thirty attendees at each concert. It wasn’t intended to become a major event, an international festival, and never felt the need to invite guests out of obligation. The goal was simply to bring motivation and joy to teachers and children alike, and I believe it has borne fruit.

“In early October, you could spot guitarists of all ages around the town – from children to adults and seniors, all passionate about guitar music. Almost seventy active participants gathered from various corners of the Czech Republic. Teachers and their pupils stayed overnight, whole families with young enthusiastic musicians, and the halls were bursting at the seams, as public attendance was truly remarkable.

“We welcomed the Chinese fingerstyle guitarist Jaco Liu and the young Italian virtuoso Andra De Vitis. The artistic highlight of the festival was the chamber recital by the world-renowned Czech guitarist Pavel Steidl, whom critics have described as one of the most significant classical guitarists in the world. He performed a programme of works by Niccolò Paganini in collaboration with the concertmaster of the Czech Philharmonic, violinist Jiří Vodička.



“Throughout these days, masterclasses were held, led by invited artists and teachers from secondary schools and conservatories from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Austria.

There were also three educational seminars for teachers.

“For the second time, we involved students from the České Budějovice Conservatory in teaching practice, which they carried out at our festival, working with pupils during the educational lectures for teachers.

“As tradition dictates, we ran two guitar orchestras – one for older and more experienced pupils, but teachers, conservatory, and academy students also regularly take part. The junior guitar ensemble was a record this year, with thirty young, enthusiastic guitarists. This year, the ensemble gave the world premiere of the piece *Espero*, which Taťána Klánská composed and dedicated to our festival.

“You could also visit the traditional exhibition of master guitar makers and the guitar-making school from Hradec Králové, as well as music publishers and distributors.



“This year, we again received media support from Czech Radio České Budějovice. A novelty for us was the visit from Czech Television, which filmed a report broadcast on 5th October in “Události v kultuře” on ČT art.

“The four autumn guitar days have always aimed to bring the very best they could – classical music, non-classical, multi-genre, romantic, music from large and small ensembles, soloists, the tones of strings, and the words of the finest practitioners and teachers.”

MORE NEWS FROM NOVÉ HRADY

It's the best Family and Senior-friendly Municipality again!



Mayor Vladimír Hokr receives the Award

Co-operation Grows between Nové Hradý and Nové Zámky

At the beginning of October, a ceremony to announce the national winner of the "Family and Senior-friendly Municipality 2025" in the Czech Republic took place at Prague's Kaiserštejn Palace. And **Nové Hradý** successfully defended last year's victory in its size category (801–5,000 inhabitants) and received a grant of CZK 618,272 (25,000 EUR). This can be used for activities for all age groups and target groups within the town and its villages.



Nové Hradý town square. For this year's event, the town welcomed a total of four brass bands—two each from South Bohemia and Moravia.

In mid-September, the annual brass band mini-festival was again held in the



In late September, at the invitation of the Mayor of **Nové Zámky**, representatives from **Nové Hradý** in the Czech Republic, made a short visit to the Slovak town. As part of the festive opening of the Obaračkové celebrations (the grape harvest festival), a meeting took place with the town's mayor Otokar Klein and other senior politicians and officers. Nové Zámky is very keen to develop further cooperation with Nové Hradý - even during this meeting, opportunities for exchange visits, school cooperation, and the development of joint activities within the Newcastle of the World alliance were agreed upon, which had already been discussed in principle during this year's Newcastle of the World conference in Latvia.



As part of this enhancing cooperation, Nové Hradý organised and hosted a Czech-Slovak entertainment event in late November. The band Dream from Nové Zámky and the Czech band Cmaj7 performed to create a great dance atmosphere.

Every year at the end of the main visitor season, Nové Hradý castle organises a festival dedicated to an important figure connected to the rich history of the castle, or someone who lived there. This year, Marie Magdalena, Countess Buquoy, née di Biglia (1573-1654), was chosen for a series of events in late October that told her story. This noblewoman of Italian origin came to Nové Hradý as a widow of the imperial general Karel Bonaventura Buquoy (1571–1621). She had the damaged castles of Rožmberk and Nové Hradý repaired, embarked on entrepreneurial ventures, and also promoted the Catholic restoration. She chose Nové Hradý as her main residence. Since the castle no longer met the standards of comfort to which she was accustomed from Western Europe, she had a palace – the Residence – built in the Nové Hradý square.



The latest OPEN Nové Hradý chess festival was held at Hotel Máj under the patronage of Mayor Vladimír Hokr, and the Rector of VŠTE České Budějovice, Vojtěch Stehel.

Forty-five chess players from the Czech Republic and Austria were in the main tournament, including three local players.

Festival of Regional Products and Goods to Delight the Tastes and Eyes of Visitors

The Novohradsko-Doudlebsko Association, in cooperation with the town of Nové Hradý, organised the 4th Annual Festival of Regional Products and Goods on 15 November. This was a truly representative showcase of producers of food and craft products, created not only throughout the Novohradsko-Doudlebsko tourist area but also in Třeboňsko and Českokrumlovsko. Twenty-five producers took part, filling the cultural hall of the Máj Hotel in Nové Hradý. Various tasting competitions, free samples, and the opportunity to purchase the products on offer were prepared for visitors, allowing them to treat themselves or their loved ones.

After all, Christmas is fast approaching!

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- Ukázkový pokrmový stůl
- Degustace a ochutnávky pro návštěvníky
- Produktové ukázkové výrobky z Novohradsko-Doudlebska a Třeboňsko a Českokrumlovsko
- Výstava ukázkových výrobků z Novohradsko-Doudlebska
- Informace o místních produktech a výrobkách

VSTUPNÉ ZDARMA

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE IS LIGHTING UP FOR CHRISTMAS



The Lord Mayor of **Newcastle upon Tyne**, Councillor Henry Gallagher (*centre*) was helped by a few friends to switch on the 2025 Christmas lights in the city!

And the Lord Mayor was joined by the Mayor of Bergen, Marit Warncke, for a heart-warming tradition that celebrates decades of friendship between the twin cities.

Together, they delivered festive speeches and pressed the switch to light up Newcastle's magnificent Christmas tree outside the Civic Centre.



The stunning Christmas lights in Leazes Park, Newcastle's largest city centre park.



A project displaying free films and sports events on a giant screen in Newcastle city centre has won an international award. "Screen on the Green" at Eldon Square was used by business improvement district NE1 to turn the former anti-social behaviour hotspot into a "welcoming" destination for families.

To celebrate its success, the project was awarded a prize for urban place management by the International Downtown Association in Washington DC.



The Lit & Phil library – a true gem of the city of **Newcastle upon Tyne** – has celebrated its 200th birthday this year. Established by the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1825, the library now has over 200,000 books making it the largest independent library in the United Kingdom outside London. The Lit & Phil has had a whole host of special bicentennial events this year– from talks, tours and lectures to library takeovers. for kids.

NEWCASTLE RADIO SHOW WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The Elders Council of **Newcastle upon Tyne** has won the national Community Radio Association award for the best "Voices of the Community" programme. "Older Voices" is a weekly hour-long radio magazine programme, the only radio magazine programme in the UK to be produced entirely by older people themselves. There are ten members of the Elders Council in the team, which has a median age of 83 (two of them being over 90). In making the award, the judges said that the show "is an inspiring demonstration of community radio at its best, delivering shows that are engaging, relevant and full of heart."

The Elders Council of Newcastle is an organisation run by older people for older people, listening to older people's issues and lobbying strongly on their behalf.

Richard Finch, Station Director of Radio Tyneside, which broadcasts Older Voices, said, "We are very proud to have Older Voices in our programme schedule and thank all the Elders Council team who put the show together week after week." Steve Whitley, the producer of the show, is a great supporter of Newcastle's of the World, attended our 2023 conference in Nove Hradý in the Czech Republic, and has recorded and broadcast many interviews with representatives of different "Newcastles".



In October, local musician Sam Fender was awarded the Mercury Prize for his third album *People Watching*. The Mercury Prize is an annual music prize awarded for the best album released by a musical act from the United Kingdom or Ireland.

THE CONCERT OF TOLERANCE IN NOVÉ ZÁMKY

A pioneering project took place on 18 November that was a very special example of coexistence in a multicultural city. The city of **Nové Zámky**, our "Newcastle" in Slovakia, is a community of multiple cultures and ethnicities.

The Concert of Tolerance created a unique social and cultural portrait of the city throughout centuries. Fourteen solo performers and groups represented Slovak, Hungarian, Romani and Jewish musical and dance heritage. The event was supported by the Kult Minor



The message was - "differences don't have to divide – they unite". There were no "them" and "us" on this evening; they were just people who believed that diversity enriches and does not separate and that respect, curiosity and love build bridges. Nové Zámky illuminated this message so brightly on the evening.



The annual City Awards ceremony in **Nové Zámky**, our "Newcastle" in Slovakia, took place in the House of Culture in October. Honours were bestowed on exceptional individuals and collectives. The laureates were praised by Mayor Otokar Klein - they included Pro Urbe Awards to Dr. Alexander Varga, Head of the Department of Haematology of the University Hospital with Polyclinic in Nové Zámky and national winner of the Personality of Medicine award for 2025 ; also Gergelya Czuczora Primary School on the occasion of its triple jubilee.

A posthumous Honorary Citizenship was given to Prof. PhDr. Klára Kuzmová, a native of Nové Zámky, the country's first professor of classical archaeology. The award was received by her daughter Ivana Kuzmová.

The annual Jazz Blues Jamboree, one of the best-recognised and oldest jazz and blues festivals in Slovakia was held again in November in Mier cinema, **Nové Zámky**. Two festival stages hosted a line-up of international performers – Tímea Skokan Horváth Trio and ZVA 12-28 Band from Slovakia, Sunnysiders from Croatia and Smokin' Chimney from Hungary.



The traditional Harvest Festival has been held on the streets of **Nové Zámky**, Slovakia.

There were delicious foods, wines from regional wineries and other specialities, as well as hand made fair, where producers from the whole country offered their unique products. The cultural programme on the Main Square and Amphitheatre combined traditional folklore and popular music, including the famous Gypsy Devils.

An international pioneering project "Folklore without borders" introduced colourful folk traditions from Slovakia, Hungary and Czechia. On the occasion of the festival a memorandum of renewal of partnership between Nové Zámky and Fonyód, Hungary, was signed.



The festive season in **Nové Zámky**, Slovakia, started on November 30. The historic Imperial-Royal Riding Hall opened its doors to a wonderful Christmas Craft Market.

The highlight of the first Sunday of Advent saw the solemn consecration of the Advent wreath on the Main Square. The festive train will enthrall children and adults during the season.

LIGHTING UP AT HERCEG NOVI



As these two angles show, new lighting has added even more drama to Forte Mare - one of the **THREE** main castles in **Herceg Novi**, our "Newcastle" in Montenegro. The city is renowned for these well-preserved fortifications, Forte Mare, Kanli Kula, and Spanjola. These historic sites, are part of the city's cultural heritage, with panoramic views of the beautiful Bay of Kotor.

Forte Mare (Sea Fortress), located on the shore in the southern part of the OldTown, was originally built by the Bosnian King Tvrtko I in 1382. By installing lighting on the part of the promenade and the shoreline below the Forte Mare fortress and on the remains of the Citade (Mezzaluna), the project for ambient lighting has been completed.

Last month, the centre of **Herceg Novi**, our "Newcastle" in Montenegro, became the set for the filming of the movie, "The Battle of the Engines", based on a true event between 1909 and 1912 that led to the beginning of the auto industry. A rally from St. Petersburg to Monaco was organised to test vehicles for mass production, with the final rally stage shot in Herceg Novi.



During filming, the set was visited by the country's Minister of Culture and Media, Tamara Vujović, who, along with the representatives of the Municipality - President Stevan Katić and Vice Mayor Ivan Otović - talked with the producers about the benefits of such projects and the potential of Herceg Novi as a film destination.



The annual Santa Parade in **Newcastle, Ontario, Canada** is a wonderful event starting with a fantastic fireworks display. This is followed by the parade entries (over 50 of them) that range from marching bands, to clowns and beautifully lit floats that children of all ages enjoy. The theme this year was "A Canadian Christmas".



THE NEWCASTLE HOSPICE IS OPEN

The Marigold Hospice in Newcastle, Ontario, Canada is now welcoming referrals for individuals living with a life-limiting illness. It's located in a beautiful setting in Newcastle, and has been built with the remarkable commitment and fundraising zeal of local people, including Councillor Willie Woo and the late Jill Richardson and recently departed, Leo Blindenbach. All three of them are also known to us from being on the organising committee of our 2016 Conference in their Newcastle.



NYBORG IS ALL SET FOR A GREAT CHRISTMAS ATMOSPHERE



There were plenty of happy people and a great Christmas atmosphere, when the festive lights were switched on for the first time this year at the square in Nyborg, our “Newcastle” in Denmark. Mayor Kenneth Muhs is pictured with Santa Claus and some of his helpers.



Each year, Nyborg unveils a “Christmas ball”, a special seasonal decoration unique to the city and the year. This year the beautiful Zoo Mill (Dyrehave Mølle) is the motif.

The mouth-blown and hand-decorated Christmas ball is made of glass, coated with a thin layer of silver inside and is therefore completely unique - just like the old mill, which for generations has been a Christmas gathering point in Nyborg. With its history, its charm and its seven impressive ceilings, Dyrehave Mølle is a motif that reflects both nostalgia and Nyborg's proud cultural heritage.

The "Mission To Restore our Ocean and Waters" Forum 2025 held in **Nyborg** was a Danish EU Presidency Conference in late September at Hotel Nyborg Strand. The European Commission launched the Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’. This Mission, part of Horizon Europe, aims in the next decade to restore the health of one of our most precious common goods: our ocean and waters. The Nyborg event focused on the mission's progress, turning its preparatory phase into widespread implementation, and included discussions on new solutions for ocean restoration and sustainability, knowledge sharing, and building partnerships for the future.

The main discussion areas were: transferring knowledge, tools, and technical solutions; scaling up real solutions for cleaner waters, restored ecosystems, and a stronger blue economy; and considering the role of the Mission within upcoming EU priorities, such as the European Ocean Pact and the “Digital Twin of the Ocean”.

The conference was organised by the University of Southern Denmark, the Technical University of Denmark (DTU), and the Ministry for Environment and Gender Equality, under the Danish EU Presidency.

It featured high-level discussions, workshops, and presentations by participating organisations.



On Tuesday, November 11, the municipality of **Neufchâteau**, Belgium, commemorated the Armistice that ended World War I.

The municipality says: “In these increasingly troubled times, it is more important than ever to hold on to the duty of memory, to avoid the same mistakes as in the past.

“Thank you to the Children's Municipal Council, the Council and the Municipal College, the firefighters, the flag bearers and the public for their presence for these commemorations”.

Other “Newcastles” commemorated the Armistice, of course, but when there was so much carnage in Belgium during the First World War, we understand why this day is always so special there.

A STUNNING GALLERY FOR NEWCASTLE, AUSTRALIA

Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia has been honoured to welcome the State Premier Chris Minns as the first official visitor to the newly-expanded Newcastle Art Gallery, ahead of its much-anticipated reopening. Premier Minns was given a first look at the stunning new gallery spaces, guided by Gallery Director Lauretta Morton OAM, City of Newcastle Chief Executive, Jeremy Bath, and State Member for Newcastle Tim Crakanthorp MP.

The visit was followed by a special event marking the community's first look inside the building, proudly centred on the Gallery's "First Nations First" ethos, a guiding principle that celebrates the creativity and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities. The city is looking forward to the full reopening of the gallery in February.



The vision of the "New Annual" festival in Newcastle, New South Wales, is to put the city on the radar nationally and internationally, as a creative city where exciting, ambitious and accessible contemporary art and culture grows and thrives. It's a 10 day festival of art, music and ideas. The 2025 festival was a great success, with thousands of people celebrating local and global art, music and ideas, as these photos show.



The City of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia has celebrated the 45th anniversary of its Sister City relationship with Ube City in Japan - they're similarly-sized harbour cities with common industrial backgrounds.

To mark the anniversary, Councillor Jenny Barrie and Councillor Mark Brooker led a Newcastle delegation to Ube from 31 October to 2 November, following an invitation from the Mayor of Ube, Keiji Shinozaki.

Soul Hub Newcastle's selfless support worker David Dorhauer has been acknowledged as the 2025 Hunter "Volunteer of the Year" for his service to people across the city.

At Soul Hub, which supports people in need in Newcastle, David is there for between four and seven shifts each week, managing the crew, training new team members and organising breakfasts.



KOTA BHARU'S SUCCESS

Congratulations to the MPKB-BRI, the Municipal Council of **Kota Bharu**, our "Newcastle" in Malaysia, for its success in receiving Smart City Early Adopter recognition from the national Ministry of Housing and Local Government, as part of World Urban Planning Day in late October. The event was officiated by the Deputy Prime Minister, YAB Datuk Amar Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof, who stressed the government's commitment to strengthen urban renewal policies through innovation and smart technology to improve the quality of life in city areas.



Praise was given to MPKB-BRI staff for their continued dedication, commitment and cooperation in making Kota Bharu a smart, sustainable and livable city by 2035, in line with the National Smart City Agenda towards the development of inclusive, competitive and high-tech communities.



The Kelantan Floral Festival in **Kota Bharu**, our "Newcastle" in Malaysia, was opened in October by Sultanah Nur Diana Petra Abdullah, the wife of the Sultan of the state of Kelantan.



City of **New Castle, Indiana**, USA Mayor Greg York (*right*), Public Works Director Dave Barker (*left*), and City Council President Rex Peckinpugh (*2nd from left*) are pictured with Santa and Mrs. Claus before lighting the 1400 Plaza Christmas Tree on November 21.



The Christmas Tree lights up and plays holiday music all season long. *Photo courtesy of The Courier-Times*

The New Castle Commercial Historic District is a national historic district located at **New Castle, Indiana**.

It encompasses 64 contributing buildings in the central business district of New Castle. It developed from 1849, and includes many excellent examples of Italianate, Classical Revival, and Commercial styles of architecture. Notable sites of interest include the separately-listed Henry County Courthouse.

Other notable buildings include the L.A. Jennings Building (1877), Odd Fellows Hall (1875, c. 1895), Murphey Building (c. 1870), Knights of Pythias Building (1891), Masonic Temple (1892), Bradway Building (1902), former United Brethren Church (1863, 1883), Citizens State Bank Building (1923), S.P. Jennings and Sons Factory complex (c. 1890), and Coca-Cola Bottling Building (1905, 1941).



NEW CASTLE PENNSYLVANIA IN CELEBRATION MOOD !



Here's a montage of photos from the "Hometown Holiday" Parade/"Light up Night" in **New Castle, Pennsylvania, USA** that began the festive season in the city. Why are Bugs Bunny and Sylvester in the foreground you might ask ? - because Warner Brothers opened their very first cinema in New Castle in 1907.

November 23rd saw the unveiling in **New Castle, Pennsylvania** of the Lawrence County, New Castle Bells Across Pennsylvania contribution to "America 250". The year 2026 is a very special one in the USA, being 250 years since the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The celebration includes a year-long series of events. The "Bells Across America" initiative for the 250th anniversary is primarily centered on Pennsylvania through "Bells Across PA", a project that places custom-designed, fiberglass bells in all 67 counties. The Liberty Bell is an iconic symbol of American independence located in Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania.



Kimberly Koller-Jones, Executive Director of Arts + Education at the Hoyt in New Castle (*centre of the photo*), is the designer of the Lawrence County bell, which is on display at Arts + Education at the Hoyt. Ginny Jacob Colella, Assistant Director at Visit Lawrence County, is the "lead" for all things America 250 in Lawrence County - *she is second from the left*, with Visit Lawrence County Director Janet Fallotico *second from the right*. *Far left* is co-designer Paige Kleinfelder of the Hoyt.

Lawrence County's "Presidential Pottery Bell" references the county's heritage in china production and fireworks, with inspiration taken from these two prominent local industries with international reach - Shenango China and Pyrotecnico fireworks. Shenango China, was a prominent manufacturer of restaurant and hotel china based in New Castle, PA that employed more than 33,000 local residents over its 100 year history. Founded in 1901, it initially focused on commercial china, later expanding into producing dinnerware for the international elite including Danish royalty and several American presidents (Eisenhower, Johnson, Truman, Roosevelt and Reagan).

Pyrotecnico has a history rooted in a family tradition of pyrotechnics that began in Italy in 1889. Constantino Vitale, the company's founder, brought his expertise to New Castle, Pennsylvania, in 1922, where the business has flourished and helped establish the town as the "Fireworks Capital of America". The company, now in its fifth generation, is known for its fireworks displays and special effects work, including providing effects for Super Bowl LVIII and this year's fireworks display at the Capital in Washington D.C.

The overall surface of the bell is crackled to imitate a porcelain dish. The design of the band around the bottom perimeter mimics the band around the Lyndon B. Johnson presidential plate, but embellished with Pennsylvania wildflowers as a tribute to the State's wildlife. Centred on the front and back of each side is a replica of the bald eagle that was also used on the Johnson presidential service (see photo, right).

Behind the eagle is a fireworks display that speaks to the celebration of the 250th anniversary and the community's firework history.



HERITAGE MONTH CULMINATES IN A VIBRANT SHOWCASE AT NEWCASTLE'S ART GALLERY



Newcastle Art Gallery, KwaZulu-Natal, **South Africa**, has hosted a special exhibition to mark the closing of Heritage Month. The showcase highlighted the rich cultural traditions, customs, and stories that form an important part of the municipality's identity, as these photos from the month demonstrate. Visitors to the gallery had the chance to learn more about local history, connect with different cultures, and share in meaningful exchanges that celebrate diversity.

We have received a report from Thulani Phakathi of **Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa** (who attended the Jaunpils conference) with an update on how the school of which he is Principal has invested the funds that the Alliance raised. The school has been able to provide 10 laptops for teaching and learning purposes, and has also been able to create both a library to help students develop their reading skills, and a sick room with bed and first aid kits for students who become ill. Through additional funds donated by members of the Neuchâtel Youth Parliament, the school has now created a "sensory corner" where learners with home difficulties can be supported individually.



Councillor Yolande Dube, Mayor of **Newcastle, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa**, is again promoting the Mayor's Bursary Fund, a fund to which Newcastles of the World has contributed in the past. There are many worthy young students in Newcastle who have the potential to develop and improve themselves by further study for vocational and other qualifications but who lack the funding from their families to support their studies. For further information, or to make a donation towards the bursary of a young person there, via Newcastles of the World, email us on newcastlesoftheworld@gmail.com.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME IS BLOOMING LOVELY !

Newcastle-under-Lyme is a borough with a winning reputation when it comes to floral displays and has been a multiple winner in past "Britain in Bloom" competitions. This year's "Newcastle in Bloom" competitions saw a record number of entries – the most in over 30 years! At the recent awards event (*below*), the amazing efforts of local gardeners, schools, businesses and community groups were celebrated.

The Bloom awards are a highlight of the year – and a brilliant way to show off the landmarks and green spaces that make the borough so special. Congratulations to everyone involved – you made Newcastle-under-Lyme bloom beautifully.

Our photo (*right*) is of the winner in the "Hanging Basket" category – well done, Kevin Bell for a wonderful baskets' display.



The Mayor of **Newcastle-under-Lyme**, Councillor Robert Bettley-Smith, (*right, centre in photo*) completed the final leg of his 100km sponsored walk around the borough boundary in early November. He began this challenge in May to raise money for PYPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide, a national charity working to prevent suicide in young people. The walk, organised by the Mayoress Judy Bettley-Smith, is dedicated to the Mayor's late father. Along the way, the couple have walked through towns, villages and countryside, bringing people together and raising awareness of mental health. The final walk on 8 November finished at Bampton Museum, where a special celebration was held.



YOUTH



The newly-elected Children's Municipal Council has been sworn in, in the presence of the Mayor (*left*) Francois Huberty, and other politicians, - in **Neufchâteau**, in the province of Luxembourg, Belgium. The children, aged 10 to 12, are elected by voting in primary schools. There is also a Communal Youth Council representing young people aged between 12 and 16 - those elected are able to sit until they are 18.

At **Jaunpils** School, "Good Deeds Days" are held every month, when students do their best to help improve and tidy the school environment. These days are organised to teach students the value of hard work, to give them opportunities to learn various practical skills, and to encourage greater respect for their school surroundings.

Now, the long-awaited time for renovating the school premises has arrived. During the repairs, pupils will move to the primary school building and other facilities—and this move will also take place with the help of the pupils themselves.



Many congratulations to Matyáš Hokr of **Nové Hradky** who triumphed in the Bohemian Chess Championship, (Czech Republic), in the category under 14 years at the end of October. By winning one of the qualifying tournaments and then becoming regional champion, Matyáš qualified for the the national championship.



Well done to the students of the Secondary Vocational School of Transport and Services, Jesenského 1, **Nové Zámky**.

In November, they took part in an important nationwide competition "Lighthouse for Transport" organised by the Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic. The theme of the competition was "When Airplanes Blow Up the Economy".

The talented students, with skills in graphic design presented the project "Air Zámky – a city that wants to fly". and won first place in the competition!



All young people from 8th grade in **Nyborg**, our "Newcastle" in Denmark, were invited to NY-D - Nyborg Youth Democracy - a democracy festival for young people, in the centre of the birthplace of Danish democracy, Nyborg. There were talks, stand-up and open air cinema, the co-creation of an art project and other engaging activities - plus great food, mocktails and a special atmosphere. The day finished with concerts at Torvet with KRYD and 9000 HOPE.

NY-D was about giving young people in Nyborg a voice - and showing that democracy can also be fun, alive and something to create together. The festival was supported by the LB association and Nyborg Youth Council were hosts.



NEWS FROM THE NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD ALLIANCE

WELCOME, SHARON !

We're delighted to welcome Sharon Race as the new Coordinator of Newcastle of the World, from 1 December. Not that she's new to our alliance - as her message below shows.

I'm thrilled to be appointed as the new Coordinator for Newcastle of the World.

Having been involved as both a member and conference attendee, I've already experienced the warmth, creativity, and shared pride that connect our global family of Newcastle— I'm looking forward to helping to strengthen those ties.

My background is in project coordination: arts and cultural programming, community engagement, and stand alone events. I've worked across charities, creative industries, and public-sector partnerships, building and executing initiatives that focus on supporting ideas, bringing groups together, and letting people shine.

I'm also a writer and film maker – you can view my short vlog-style films of the conferences in Nové Hrad, and, more recently, Jaunpils on YouTube!

I'm excited about expanding opportunities for collaboration, cultural exchange, and youth involvement, ensuring more people from our Newcastle feel part of the network, so that we'll see more exchanges, more shared projects, and more opportunities for people of all ages to get involved. Newcastle of the World has huge potential. If you have an idea, a project, or simply want to connect, please get in touch -newcastles@sharonrace.co.uk

Happy Holidays to all and here's to Newcastle of the World in 2026!

Thank you to **Jaunpils** for the extremely useful survey and report of the views of delegates of the conference in August. This is the first time that such a post-conference survey has been carried out, and it has produced some very important conclusions that will help us make future conferences an even better experience for delegates.



As she says above, Sharon has produced two films that capture the stories and spirit of the Jaunpils conference - <https://www.youtube.com/@RacesAroundTheWorld>



We have just been informed that the “**Newcastles Passport**” project created by Newcastle of the World is the winner of the “Best of British Getaways” award in the category of “innovation in Tourism Promotion”. We had been nominated and then submitted a full application - the award ceremony will take place in the New Year. The Newcastle Passport scheme promotes tourism and friendship between Newcastle around the world. Each Newcastle taking part has carefully selected a series of special offers just for visitors from other Newcastle

Check out the Newcastle Passport here - <https://newcastlesoftheworld.com/passport/>

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 Newcastle together via the Newcastle 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 in 2004 and 2010, UK 2006 (Newcastle-under-Lyme) & 2012 (Newcastle upon Tyne), Germany (Neuburg) in 2008, Nové Hrad (Czech Republic) in 2014, Newcastle, Ontario, Canada in 2016, Shinshiro again in 2018, Nové Hrad again in 2023 and Jaunpils (Latvia) in 2025. Our aim is to foster individual, group and civic friendships, with practical links through culture, education, business and tourism.



We are also happy that **Monjer Rashid**, will support the team as an adviser and helper on youth projects. Monjer has attended many of our conferences, from the first time as a youth delegate in 2010, and is also based in Newcastle upon Tyne. He has extensive experience in the youth, community and voluntary sectors, and in international youth exchange networks and projects.



We're going to take forward an idea of linking **libraries** in different Newcastle - specifically, by asking each main Alliance library to dedicate a shelf for books about other Newcastle. Contact us if your Newcastle would like to take part.

Newcastle to Soweto: The Race for Peace 2026 has officially launched!



Founder Tim Cattle-Jones and The Race for Peace's Lindsay Cessford met with North East Mayor Kim McGuinness to discuss The Race for Peace pledge and present her with her official event T-shirt - marking the official launch of @The Race for Peace 2026, with the Mayor, Kim McGuinness the first confirmed runner of the Newcastle upon Tyne event. The event commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising, when on June 16, 1976, hundreds of school children were shot and killed by the security forces for protesting against Apartheid.

A story, spanning 30 years in the making, Race for Peace was founded by Tim Cattle-Jones, who has spent three decades linking the North East of England and South Africa, through sport and culture.

"My time in South Africa allowed me to witness firsthand the role that Sport can play in bringing communities together. When I first went there in 1992 the country was on the verge of civil war, it was Nelson Mandela's drive to bring the nation together through sport that helped ensure a peaceful transition to democracy." says Tim Cattle-Jones

As part of the wider mission to boost participation and community cohesion, Race for Peace will invite North East schools to organise events to promote Peace. On 16 June, pupils will lead 2km School Peace Walks, completing the peaceful protest that in 1976, Soweto's learners were never allowed to finish, and host Cultural School Events from murals to mini-festivals. Working with Race for Peace Youth Ambassadors, we'll bring schools together through a series of evolving activities such as Global Creative Challenges and facilitated exchanges (pen-pals, poem swaps, Day-in-the-Life links). Toolkits will be provided. Every activity aims to connect classrooms locally and globally while feeding directly into the initiative's goals of participation, community cohesion, and bringing communities together around the world. *"The Race for Peace is an opportunity for people around the world to show they care for each other. I hope it can be a catalyst for communities to come together to celebrate our differences and promote diversity."*

At this year's Newcastles of the World Conference in **Jaunpils**, Latvia. The Race for Peace was adopted as a special initiative, and the organisers hope that as many Newcastle's as possible will participate in the Event. Confirmed participants are currently Newcastle upon Tyne, Neuchatel, Shinshiro and Jaunpils. For more information on how to get involved email: lindsay@raceforpeace.world

Thank you to everyone who works so hard to make the festive season special for the residents of our Newcastles across the world. It's a big job, as the photo on the left from Neufchâteau, Belgium, shows - but as the the other photo demonstrates, it's well worth while and much appreciated!



SPORT

Congratulations to the Newcastle Jets (**Newcastle**, New South Wales) who won the Australia Cup (football/soccer) with a 3-1 victory over Heidelberg United in October.



The FIA World Rally Championship (WRC) Forum 8 Rally Japan 2025 was held from November 6 to 9 in Aichi Prefecture, where the city of **Shinshiro** is located, and Shinshiro served as an SS (Special Stage) venue, where many rally cars competed on public roads.

The 2025 Rally Japan was the thirteenth round of the 2025 World Rally Championship. The 2025 event was based in Nagoya in Chūbu Region and was contested over twenty special stages, covering a total competitive distance of 305.34 km (189.73 mi). Sébastien Ogier and Vincent Landais won the rally, and their team, Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT, were the manufacturer's winner.

The young generation of **Nové Zámky** handball players have achieved something special - never before in the history of MHC Nové Zámky club have players from the club started in the national team in such numbers. This was the qualifying tournament for the 2026 European Championships in the elite A-category. Slovakia defeated the Netherlands in the key match and players from MHC Nové Zámky significantly contributed to the win, scoring a total of 15 goals in the decisive match.



National coach Tomáš Straňovský also works in the Nové Zámky club - congratulations to him and to the MHC Nové Zámky players in the team, Jakub Bořanský, Alex Bednárik, Nico Straňovský and Patrik Struhár. For the Nové Zámky region, it was even more important because the whole tournament took place practically "around the corner", in the Municipal Sports Hall in nearby Šala.



A winner and a runner-up in the All Japan Karate Championship are from **Shinshiro**, our "Newcastle", and they paid a recent visit home to be received by the Mayor, Hiroyuki Shimoe. Yuina Kobayashi was the winner of the Women's Heavyweight category and Yoshinori Natsume the runner-up in the Men's Senior Heavyweight category. The championship was held at Dolphins Arena, next to Nagoya Castle.



The Taekwon-Do Academy **Nové Zámky** club has traditionally participated in the annual national Slovak Taekwon-Do ITF Championships.

This year, thanks to their all-year-round preparation, they won 8 gold medals, 10 silver medals and 10 bronze medals, and the club was ranked as the third most successful club of the Championship.