

Foreword



Cllr Paul Watson
Leader,
Sunderland City Council

Welcome to the second edition of Worldwide.

Since the last issue, there have been some significant developments in our international work, which you can read about in this edition.

The International Strategy, developed by the Sunderland Partnership and Sunderland City Council, has also been updated and will now run alongside the Sunderland Strategy for 2008-2025. It's available to view online at www.sunderland.gov.uk.

In the current economic climate, it's more and more important that we build on our international connections to minimise any negative impact on the city and, of course, generate new opportunities.

With this in mind, partners across the city are continuing to work together on international activity to develop economic, educational and cultural benefits for Sunderland.

As always, we are interested in any comments you have or contributions you would like to make to this bulletin. Please send them to me via the International Team at Sunderland City Council.

International support grows for World Heritage Site bid

Sunderland, together with Jarrow in South Tyneside, could soon be home to North East England's third World Heritage Site – and support for the bid is coming in from around the world.

The monastery centres on St Peter's Church in Sunderland and St Paul's Church in Jarrow. It will be nominated for World Heritage Site Status by the UK government in 2010.

Representatives from over 30 countries have already pledged their support for the twin Anglo-Saxon monastery to receive the international honour.

The historical significance of the site is the reason it attracts visitors from around the globe. Francesco Traversi, an Italian composer, recently visited the site after performing a concert in Siena, Italy, the home of the Codex Amiatinus for 1000 years. The Codex Amiatinus is the earliest surviving manuscript of the complete bible, and was written at Wearmouth-Jarrow in the 7th century, and is now in Florence.

Francesco said: "We would like to organise a concert in the original home of the Codex Amiatinus and I have visited the sites to see if this is possible."

Civic dignitaries, business leaders and visitors from as far afield as New Zealand and Malaysia have backed the bid by signing the one of the 'Books of Life'. The books are new versions of old manuscripts, which were used to record the names of supporters of particular monasteries over many centuries, from 7th-century Northumbria onwards.

The Mayor of Essen, one of Sunderland's twin towns, signed the book at his city's own World Heritage Site.

His message of support read: "With its World Heritage Site Zollverein, the city of Essen sincerely wishes that its twin city of Sunderland will also be a city with its own World Heritage Site soon, bringing even more attention to its rich history".

Others who can't make it to the venues have pledged their support online, including people from 18 US states, Canada and Scandinavia. One American visitor to the website wrote: "Wearmouth-Jarrow is one of the significant historical sites in British history – home of Bede and the finest cultural institution in the early Middle Ages".

You can pledge your support for the nomination by visiting www.wearmouth-jarrow.org.uk



Francesco Traversi pictured next to a replica Codex Amiatinus at Bede's World

Sunderland shows it's a glass act in China

A piece of Sunderland glass has travelled more than 5000 miles to be displayed in a new museum in Harbin, China.

The museum, which was officially opened on 5th January 2009, celebrates Harbin's friendship with cities across the world, including Sunderland.



Glass artists Joanne Mitchell and Jessamy Kelly, who work together as Juo, created a fused glass wall hanging which depicts the Sunderland skyline and the Wearmouth Bridge. The kiln-formed panel is called 'Wearside Migration' and was inspired by the sunset and sunrise over the silhouetted bridges of Sunderland. The hand-painted migrating birds represent the journey east to China.

Juo were selected to design a piece to represent Sunderland in the museum from a number of submissions by glass artists in the Cohesion network, an organisation supported by Sunderland City Council.

Sunderland is one of only a few European cities to be featured in the new Harbin museum. The piece of glass will be on display alongside information about Sunderland's past and present.

Joanne Mitchell and Jessamy Kelly of Juo with Sunderland City Council Leader, Cllr Paul Watson

Learning from each other

Teachers from the Engineering School at the University of Nantes-Saint-Nazaire have been in Sunderland to look at opportunities to work together with the University of Sunderland, as well as explore the possibility of some of their students undertaking placements in city businesses.

Sunderland's newest e-commerce centre, Evolve, was just one of the places the group visited during their time in Sunderland. They also met with university and business leaders in the city.

Monika Marot said: "The Evolve business centre was particularly impressive and would be a great place for our students to experience working life. We are also interested in looking at opportunities to develop joint initiatives in partnership with the University of Sunderland."

Entente Cordiale

A delegation from Sunderland joined the Mayor of the city's French twin town, Saint-Nazaire as he received an OBE.

Mayor Batteux went to the home of the British Ambassador in Paris to receive the royal honour, on behalf of his town. The honour recognises Saint-Nazaire's strong historic and cultural links with the United Kingdom, including significant activity with World War II veterans.

Joël Batteux said: "Much more than being for me, this eminent distinction is an honour for the town of Saint-Nazaire and 'Saint-Nazaire Society' as an organisation.

Mayor Batteux invited Sunderland to share in the special occasion in recognition of the relationship between both communities.

The British Ambassador to France, Sir Peter Westmacott, praised "the exceptional relations that Saint-Nazaire has with Great Britain." These include the annual remembrance ceremonies for more than 4000 people who lost their lives during the sinking of the RMS

Lancastria following the Dunkirk evacuation, and those who took part in the daring commando raid on the port of Saint-Nazaire as part of Operation Chariot.

Sunderland's partnership with Saint-Nazaire goes back as far as 1953.

The relationship has seen a range of projects develop over the years.

Both Saint-Nazaire's Mayor and his colleague Jacqueline Perrin, responsible for international relations, took part in early school exchanges with Sunderland. Today, work continues to open up opportunities for more school to school activity in key areas such as sustainability.



Deputy Mayor, Cllr Richardson, alongside other invited guests of Mayor Batteux

An international city for a better future

Expert help for project on new American President

Children at Broadway Junior School were able to call in expert help for their latest project on new American President Barack Obama.

The Year 6 pupils were set the task of writing an article on Barack Obama's election victory as part of a journalistic writing project.

And who better to turn to than Washington DC scholarship student Hortense Brent who was the latest American student to study in Sunderland under the city's Friendship Agreement with Washington DC.

Teacher Claire Rushworth said: "We have some really enthusiastic budding reporters here and it was a fantastic

experience for the children to find out about the whole election process."

Fine Arts student Hortense also found the visit rewarding: "It was fabulous. The kids were really inquisitive and asked lots of questions and they'd certainly done their homework."



Sharing experience with Russia

A delegation of 13 Russians visited Sunderland to share their experience of coping with major incidents and the long-term trauma these can cause. The delegation included senior representatives from North Ossetia-Alania which was where more than 300 children were killed in the Beslan school siege of 2004.

Sunderland colleagues shared their experience of emergency planning and had the opportunity to learn from Russian colleagues about their approach to supporting and counselling those involved.

Leading the way

Two Sunderland young leaders have taken part in a cultural exchange with China.

Jack Saward, 30, and Hollie Coxon, 19, were among the first 100 young leaders in the country to take part in the inaugural China 400 : An Exchange of Future Leaders.

Jack, a prevention manager at Sunderland's Youth Offending Service and Hollie, a volunteer with Sunderland City Council's Youth Development Group, spent ten days in Beijing and Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province.

They returned with ideas about how they can put their learning into practice to benefit the children and young people they work with across the city.

The visit was organised by the British Council in partnership with the All China Youth Federation.

Speaking after the trip, Hollie said: "Being chosen to take part in this first visit was both challenging and rewarding, and gave us all the chance to meet people from a different culture with different ideologies and a different approach to life.

"I found the young people in China to be less confident in some ways than they are here, but somehow more focused

and driven, so we both can learn from each other."



Jack and Hollie making friends in China

Behind the scenes...

World Health Organisation

Sunderland recently attended the World Health Organisation's European Healthy Cities Conference in Zagreb, Croatia.

Councillor Eric Timmins, portfolio holder for Adult Services at Sunderland City Council, signed a declaration to strengthen and champion action on health, equity and health, sustainable development and social justice.

Nine examples of good practice from

Sunderland were featured at the conference.

Eurocities Conference and AGM

One year on from becoming a member of Eurocities, Sunderland attended the 'Building Active Cities: Modern Citizenship and Integrated Governance' Conference and AGM. Officers had the opportunity to discuss Sunderland's future plans for activity within the network in the coming year. Areas such as Economic Development, Environment and Knowledge Society were discussed both with Eurocities

policy officers and representatives from local authorities across Europe.

Tackling Climate Change

Demonstrating its commitment to the environment, Sunderland signed the Eurocities Declaration on Climate Change, in November. The Declaration recognises the impact local authorities can have in the fight against climate change and aims to encourage the sharing of good practice. Signing the Declaration represents a pledge on Sunderland's part to play its role in tackling this important global issue.

Irish conference

Sunderland was painted green when cultural experts from across the globe came to the city to take part in the UK's largest independent Irish conference at the end of last year.

Visitors came from as far away as America, Latvia, Canada, Germany, Italy,

Gran Canaria, Greece and South Africa.

Organised by the University of Sunderland, the conference celebrates the richness of Ireland's writing, history and culture, as well as encouraging local people to find out more about the country's heritage.

Now in its sixth year the event has gone from strength to strength and is now sponsored by the Irish Government as well as the Irish Embassy.

Building on its success, an Irish festival was held in the Sunnyside area of the city.

Sunderland's International Connections bring more benefits to the city

Fusion Contact Centre Services in Sunderland has started the New Year very positively with a continued recruitment drive to cope with increased demands of the business.

The brainchild of a South African entrepreneur, Fusion is the call centre division of the BGL Group, a major player in UK motor and home insurance.

It first came to Sunderland in 2003 and now employs 300 people at the site on the Sunderland Enterprise Park, helping to revitalise the city's economy,

alongside other companies on Sunderland's business parks which come from many other countries around the world.

The latest new jobs will be created to cope with increased demand in the sales and renewals part of the business.

Fusion employs 1,500 people in total throughout its four UK locations – including Sunderland – and one site in Cape Town, South Africa.



Fusion welcomes its new partner, HSBC

Danes learn from autism support in Sunderland

Autism organisations in Sunderland recently shared their knowledge and expertise with a visiting delegation from Denmark.

A group of Danish politicians and autism professionals came to Sunderland because they believe the city has one of the most effective systems in the world for supporting people who have autism.

The delegation visited a range of services for adults who have autism provided by ESPA (European Services for People with Autism), the Tyne and Wear Autistic Society as well as Sunderland City Council.

China calling

Businesses in Sunderland are being given the chance to develop trade links with firms in the world's fastest growing economy.

Sunderland City Council, alongside UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) and One NorthEast, is spearheading a summer trade mission to China with the aim of helping local businesses break into developing markets and develop valuable partnerships.

And there are still spaces for companies to join the visit.

The visit takes place between May 15 - 25, and takes in the fast growing

regional cities of Harbin and Nanjing.

Experienced trade advisors will provide support throughout the visit and help to identify relevant contacts. Financial assistance is also available for eligible businesses.

Harbin is the 10th largest city in China and a key trading post with Russia. Nanjing is second only to Shanghai as a commercial centre in East China and is a hotbed for the automotive industry.

For further details contact Cheryl Jones at Sunderland City Council's Business Investment Team on 0191 561 7948 or email Cheryl.jones@sunderland.gov.uk.

Dates for your diary...

George Washington's birthday

22 February

St Patrick's Day

17 March

European elections

4 - 7 June

Europe day

9 May

If you have any questions or comments regarding anything contained in this newsletter please contact:

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