

Saturday, November 19, 2022



> Newcastle Christmas Market

Stalls set out, fairy lights on, it's starting to feel a lot like...

THIS weekend heralds the return of Newcastle's Christmas market. In the heart of the city centre, the market and its stalls encircle Grey's Monument, meander down Grainger and Grey Street, and for the first time, extend to a newly created area on Old Eldon Square.

The new space will see Alpine-inspired, wooden-clad stalls festooned with Christmas lights selling local artisan produce and Christmas crafts to add to the festive feel in the city.

This year, the shape and content of the market has been heavily influenced by the views of the people of Newcastle. A survey conducted amongst visitors to the market last

...Christmas! And Newcastle business improvement district NE1 maintains that Newcastle Christmas markets and New Year celebrations are a quest for the best

year showed 97% of those interviewed thought a Christmas market was important for the city centre, and for attracting visitors, boosting business and creating a great Christmassy feel in the heart of the city.

The same research showed the market alone was the main reason over 20% of shoppers had visited, a ringing endorsement and a big factor in the return of the market this year.

Further key messages that emerged from last year's research were that people wanted more live

music, and choirs as well as entertainment for children as part of the Christmas market activities.

This feedback has been taken on board and NE1 and Newcastle City Council have worked hard to give people what they asked for, creating a market and a festive experience that caters for the wish list.

This year there will be more music and family-focused activities in the heart of the city both at the Christmas market itself and around the city centre with roving performances

including choirs, stilt walkers, talking presents and other festive fun. Activities will take place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays starting this weekend, continuing until December 23.

Another key finding from the research was that people loved the local focus of last year's market.

People liked that the market returned after the Covid pandemic with a more local, quality feel, showcasing North East producers, artisans and crafters, a fact that was evidenced by the spend. Even with the

reduced number of stalls and smaller market footprint given the truncated lead-time with Covid uncertainty, nearly three-quarters of visitors to last year's Christmas market made a purchase, compared to just over 50% of visitors to the market in 2019 and on average they spent more.

In shaping this year's Christmas market and events, the priority has been to keep it local and to integrate and blend the Christmas offer with the city's existing markets, most notably the Grainger Market. All Grainger Market traders were offered the chance to take a stall at the

J2 Agenda

Time out EXTRA

who, what, where, when?

WHO wrote the story collections *The Wrong Set* and *Such Darling Dodos*?

WHAT was the stage name of the Australian music hall act Florence (Flora) Flannagan?

WHERE is R.D. Blackmore's novel *Lorna Doone* set?

WHEN were Chelsea FC formed?

remember when...



➤ Zinedine Zidane scores at the World Cup final but what year was it?

The following events all occurred in a year in living memory. Can you guess the year?

1. The Winter Olympics were held at Nagano, Japan
2. Earth Summit won the Aintree Grand National
3. The drug Viagra became available
4. France won the football World Cup

impossipuzzles

"That's right, two boys and a girl," said Terry. "The ages of the boys and my age total six times Carol's age, and when she was born Adam was half again as old as Ben was."

Alan shook his head. "I don't even know your age."

"Well, figure it out," Terry replied. "I'm just the total of their three ages, and Adam was a year younger than Ben's present age when Ben was as old as Carol is now."

Quite a teaser! How old is Terry?

wordwise

The word may sound familiar, but what does it mean?

JOCOSE

A Capable of being harnessed

B An ignorant fellow

C Humorous, facetious

who am I?

A singer, I was born in Romford in 1979. I found international fame at the age of twenty for being one seventh of manufactured pop band S Club 7 with their own TV show. I left the limelight after the band split in 2003. In 2021, I released my second solo album, *With Love*.

answers

WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN: Angus Wilson; Florrie Forde; Exmoor, Devon; 1905.

REMEMBER WHEN: 1998.

IMPOSSIPUZZLES: Terry 35, children 10, 12, and 13 years.

WORDWISE: C.

WHO AM I: Jo O'Meara.

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Christmas market and efforts have been made to encourage footfall from the pop-up Christmas market into the established Grainger Market by improving the links between the two and creating festive activities within the covered market.

The Grainger Market plays an integral role in the city's Christmas activities this year. Festive family activities including choirs, music and a Santa's grotto, are all being staged in the Grainger Market to encourage visitor traffic from the external Christmas market, and to attract festive fun-seekers. The Grainger Market will also be open on Sundays from November 27, and including December 4, 11 and 18 for extra shopping opportunities.

The research showed the majority of people love the Christmas markets and recognise their importance for the city, knowing they help make Newcastle an attractive destination for shoppers and visitors in the run-up to Christmas.

Newcastle is also gearing up to continue the festivities into the New Year with the return of the three-day spectacular, Laser Light City with Seb-Lee Delisle. From December 30 to the January 1, NE1 and Newcastle City Council are bringing back the interactive laser light show that lit up the night skies last New Year. This time the focus of this impressive laser installation will be Newcastle's Quayside.

Without the constraints of Covid lockdowns and restrictions on public gatherings, people are being encouraged to come into the city to take part and witness the skies illuminated by the laser light show, enjoy the musical accompaniment and see the iconic Quayside lit up like never before.

Performed by BAFTA-winning artist, Seb-Lee Delisle, the light show will take place on the hour, every hour from 5pm. In between these hourly performances, the public will get the chance to control the lasers, an activity that was so popular last year that over 29,000 people went online to take their turn to direct laser beams across Newcastle.

This year there will be even more lasers, more activity concentrated on the Quayside with food and drink sellers, and performers, as well as the expectation that more people will want to try their hand at controlling the powerful laser beams.

Staging the laser light show over three nights will widen access to the event, allowing it to be enjoyed by people of all ages, and will make Newcastle's New Year's celebrations one of the biggest in the UK.

The joy of the three-night event is that people won't need to rush to a late night event on one solitary night that only lasts for ten to 15 minutes. Instead they can visit at their leisure over the duration.

Organisers are confident that three



consecutive nights of festivities, centred on the New Year's laser-light show, will help cement Newcastle's place in the top tier of UK destinations to celebrate New Year in style.

The city's iconic riverside, its bridges, historic architecture and its people provide the setting and the ambience to welcome New Year revellers from across the UK and further afield and a BAFTA award-winning artist putting on a three-day world-class laser light show is the icing on the cake.

Newcastle knows how to host a great party with quality restaurants, hotels and cultural venues all ready to welcome visitors and the city as a whole is poised, ready to create something enormous.

The city has big ambitions for its Christmas Markets and its New Year's Eve celebrations. NE1 in partnership with Newcastle City Council will continue to strive to scale up the festivities and to put on spectacular holiday celebrations befitting a modern, cosmopolitan, European regional capital city.

HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS MARKETS

AS a city Newcastle is not alone in hosting Christmas markets.

As a modern, European regional capital city it would be remiss if Newcastle did not have a festive focused event. Christmas markets are now used the world over to add vibrancy to a city, to attract visitors in the run up to Christmas and to boost local economies.

In the UK, Christmas markets have been hosted for more than 40 years. The first, German-inspired traditional market was held in Lincoln in the 1980s thanks to the town's neighbourhood twinning with the German town of Neustadt, which helped to establish the tradition in the UK. It wasn't until the late 1990s that other cities like Manchester and Birmingham followed suit, introducing huge festive markets to rival the Christmas markets in Germany.

This type of Alpine-inspired market, with wooden-clad stalls is a relatively new, but extremely popular festive tradition, and has been adopted in cities across the globe from Europe to the US.

In Newcastle, as in other cities, the Christmas market is a key tourist attraction and a great way to attract people to the city as well as delivering a major boost to the local economy.

Research has shown that the economic impact of the Christmas Market last year was over £16m. This included the spend directly at the Market coupled with money spent in the city centre by those who came to Newcastle specifically to visit the market.

FACTS AND FIGURES FROM CHRISTMAS MARKET 2021

(Information supplied by Elijah Research 2021 – Newcastle's Christmas Markets – People and Perceptions survey)

■ Over half a million visits to the Christmas Market in 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic played a significant part in reducing the market's size, footprint and number of visitors.

■ 74% of visitors to the market were non-Newcastle residents. 64% were from the wider North East region, with 9% from elsewhere in the UK, and 1% from outside the UK.

■ 20% of visitors had travelled into the city centre specifically to visit the Market.

■ Perceptions of the Christmas Market were extremely positive (85%)

■ Economic impact of the Christmas Market was over £16 million – including spending on-site and spend in the city centre by those who visited specifically to visit the Market.