

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



AUSTRALIA'S TOP TEAM !

We don't usually lead our main news stories with sport, but it's been such a wonderful 12 months for the Newcastle Jets football (soccer) team in **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia**.

At the end of April, they secured the A-League Premiers Plate for the first time in the club's history by finishing top of the 2025-26 league, five points clear. After week 5 of the season, the Jets were actually bottom but they went on a wonderful unbeaten run to the top of the Premier table by week 15 and stayed there !

They showed a fearless playing style with an exciting young squad.

Being league champions means that the Jets have a place in the prestigious AFC Champions League for season 2026-27, their first appearance in Asian football's premier continental club competition.

And last October, the Jets won the Australia Cup for the first time!

Incidentally, the name "Jets" is a reference to RAAF Base Williamtown, located just 20km north of Newcastle.

Newsletter No. 57 : July - September 2026

www.newcastlesoftheworld.com

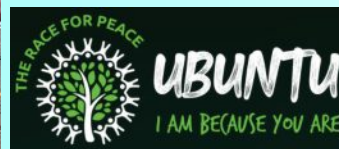
ON THE MOVE FOR PEACE

The Race for Peace is inspired by one of the most powerful youth-led movements in history - the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976 when thousands of South African students protested against injustice and for dignity, education, and freedom. Their bravery was met with violence, and hundreds of young lives were lost. That day shocked the world and became a turning point in the struggle against apartheid. The day is now commemorated through the Race for Peace - not a competition, but community-led events united by a simple but powerful idea: peace through participation. Several of our Newcastles took part this year.



Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

See p 14 for more info and p15 for a wonderful poem by Tahmina Ali.



Nové Zámky Slovakia

PRIMATES: BETWEEN ART AND SCIENCE

Italian artist Davide Rivalta made a splash in **Neuchâtel**, our Newcastle in Switzerland, with his 2018 exhibition of sculpted animals, and he has returned to the city with a collection of incredibly lifelike primates. Gorillas, orangutans and chimpanzees have been installed throughout the city streets, along a trail that allows visitors to follow in their footsteps. At the Natural History Museum, thanks to contributions from scientists, an exhibition offers a deeper understanding of what goes on in the minds of our distant cousins.



Fuller details are here:

www.neuchatelville.ch/animaux-rivalta

(In the photo: Julie Courcier Delafontaine, city councilor, the artist, and partners. Photo credit: Bernard Python)





Neuburg an der Donau, our "Newcastle" in Bavaria, Germany, has officially stepped into a new era—both in size and leadership. With the city now surpassing 30,000 residents, its Stadtrat (City Council) has expanded to 40 members, reflecting its growing importance. At the helm is new Oberbürgermeister (Lord Mayor) Gerhard Schoder (*right in photo*), leading a team that blends tradition with fresh energy. Among the notable faces: Dr. Johann Habermeyer (*left*) continues as Second Mayor, a steady hand in local politics. But the big headline? Helena Schlussnus joins as Bürgermeisterin (Deputy Mayor)—the first woman to hold the role in 25 years, marking a long-overdue shift. As Neuburg grows, so does its representation. The message is clear: this council isn't just bigger—it's ready to make its mark.



ABOUT THE NEW LORD MAYOR

Gerhard Schoder grew up in Neuburg. After graduating from Descartes-Gymnasium and the University of Ulm, his career took him to the United States. After returning to Germany, he worked in the private sector, and then became self-employed as a management consultant. He lives in Neuburg, is married and the father of four children. He has been a member of the Neuburg an der Donau city council since 2020 as a member of the Alliance 90/The Greens group, which is now running the Council in partnership with the SPD. Mr Schoder is also a councillor in the Neuburg-Schrobenhausen district .

We send him congratulations and best wishes, and also say a big thank you to former Lord Mayor Bernhard Gmehling for his 24 years in that role, during which time he and his council have been so supportive of Newcastles of the World.

Gavin Morris, the new Lord Mayor of **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia** (*above*), is an Australian media personality and politician who became Lord Mayor after winning the April 2026 by-election. He grew up in the region and was previously well known as a weather presenter and news co-anchor on television - and before that worked for several radio stations. The by-election was triggered by the resignation of former Lord Mayor Ross Kerridge in February for health reasons.



Beginning his second term as Lord Mayor of **Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom**, is Councillor Henry Gallagher (*right, standing*), alongside new Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Alistair Chisholm, with his assistance dog, Umber. Pictured *left* is Councillor Colin Ferguson, the new Leader of the Council, whose Liberal Democrats are the majority party, in cooperation with the Greens.



We say a big thank you and happy retirement to Janet Falotico (*left in the photo*) after 28 years as Executive Director of *Visit Lawrence County*, headquartered in **New Castle, Pennsylvania, USA**. Janet has been associated with Newcastles of the World for many years as our correspondent in her home city and we had the pleasure of meeting her when she attended our conference in Newcastle, Canada in 2016. She is photographed being presented with a House of Representatives citation for her outstanding service by Senator Michelle Brooks.



The new Mayor of **Newcastle-under-Lyme, United Kingdom** is Councillor Christopher Bailey (*left*). Mayors in the UK chair Council meetings (speaker) and hold casting votes if required. The Mayor served in the British Army touring Germany and Northern Ireland, and gained a degree in Medieval History and Social Science at the age of 60.

The new Leader of the Council is Councillor Jonathan Gullis (*right*) of the majority Reform Group, a former Member of the UK national Parliament.



SHINSHIRO, JAPAN

On May 5, the 61st Nagashino Battle Flag Festival was held, commemorating an important battle in Japanese history that took place in Shinshiro. A grand procession stretching 90 metres paraded along a 2km route from Shinshiro City Hall Horai Branch Office to the Nagashino Castle Ruins. The procession included Murakami of the popular Japanese comedy duo Madical Lovely, who serves as a tourism ambassador for Shinshiro City, helping to energise the event.



At the festival, various performances took place, including a performance of the Nagashino Jindaiko, which has a tradition of 50 years, a calligraphy performance by Reiho Urui, a young calligrapher from Shinshiro, and a Hideyoshi Hashiba (Toyotomi) impersonation contest.



In addition, on Sunday, June 7, the Shitaragahara Battlefield Festival was held, where performances such as matchlock gun troop demonstrations entertained the crowd.



At the important Annecy International Animation Film Festival, held in France, 21-27 June, the short animated film *Bucketman*, created by Takaya Tanaka (pen name: Yakatakanata), from Shinshiro City, was chosen as one of the 17 works in the "Perspectives" section.



In April, he reported this selection to the mayor and commented: "I never expected to be selected, but I am honestly very happy!"

Our photo is of him with Mayor Hiroyuki Shimoe.

NOVÉ HRADY, CZECH REPUBLIC

Newcastles of the World brings people together across the globe! Here's Miho Ishino Moriya (on the left) from Shinshiro, our "Newcastle" in Japan, visiting Nové Hradý, South Bohemia, Czech Republic, with her family in May. Mayor Vladimír Hokr is at the back in the photo. Twelve years later, Miho was returning to the town that hosted her as part of the Shinshiro delegation to the 2014 Newcastles of the World conference.



On May 9, the event for the opening of the Summer Tourist Season 2026 took place on the Nové Hradý square.

The town itself was presented in one of the stands as part of the New Castles of the World alliance. Visitors found out how many Nové Hradýs there are in the world and what the aims and goals of our alliance are. The stand was decorated with beautiful photographs by local photographer Jan Kypet Šmíd from a visit to Japan and the city of Shinshiro itself.

Following the NOTW cookbook, local pastry chef Lucie Vlkojanová baked special desserts for all from various Nové Hradýs of the world - America, Australia, Germany and of course the Czech Republic. As a souvenir, children could try making a badge with the alliance logo. The event also included a historical guided tour of the city in period costumes, a short orienteering run through the city, and a creative painting programme for children.



See next page for another story from Nové Hradý

NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND

BETWEEN FANTASY CINEMA AND FOOTBALL !

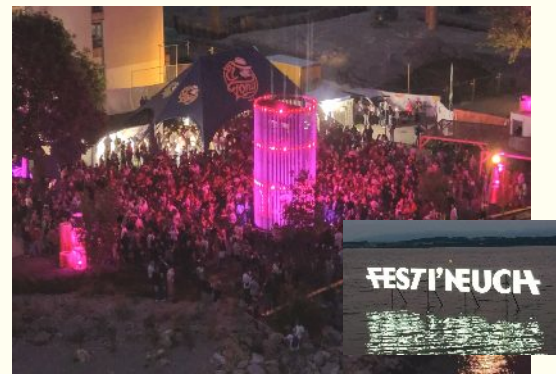
This summer, locals and tourists alike are again enjoying time at the magnificent Place des Halles to watch fantasy films as part of the Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival (NIFFF) And because genre film enthusiasts and football fans can easily coexist and share their passion, it has also been possible to watch World Cup matches on the same giant screen!

It's going to be for the round of 16 and quarter-final matches.

So the Place des Halles is the place to enjoy different, but always exciting, atmospheres! (photo: Claire Zombas)



Congratulations to the organisers and volunteers at the wonderful Festi'Neuch festival in Neuchâtel. The 25th edition of this great open air waterfront festival in June attracted over 50,000 festival-goers (photo: David Marchon)



Summer Arrives at Jeunes-Rives

This summer, the people of Neuchâtel are again able to fully enjoy the city's Jeunes-Rives park with its beaches, pontoons, and changing rooms. Improvement work to the park, a very special place for local people, continues without encroaching on the recreational areas.

And, most importantly, visitors can enjoy the new Jeunes-Rives restaurant.

This large wooden building was designed by Frundgallina, which originated the whole concept for the redevelopment of the lakefront. Also during the summer, the Jeunes-Rives café-bath will open its doors: this other wooden building, built on stilts, will operate as a café and also as a sauna in winter, with a breathtaking view of the lake and revitalised cove.

(Photos: City of Neuchâtel, Violaine Blétry-de Montmollin, city councillor, with the owners).



MORE NEWS FROM NOVÉ HRADY

The 16th annual benefit concert called "Who Likes?" took place on May 23 in **Nové Hradý, Czech Republic.**

The city square had a great atmosphere and the event supported the Prachatice hospital.

This year included performances by the Nové Hradý dance group One Way and talented singer Julia Mročková from Ločnice (students of the Trhové Sviny Grammar School and the F. Pišinger T. Sviny Elementary School). The entire evening was hosted by presenter Michaela Doležalová. With organiser Martin France, there was rock singer Marcela Březinová, actress and singer Eva Burešová, musical diva and actress Vanda Károlyi, South Bohemian singer Maja Rose, singer Michael Malý.

The concert ended with a performance by legendary clarinetist and saxophonist Felix Slováček, who was celebrating his 83rd birthday that day!

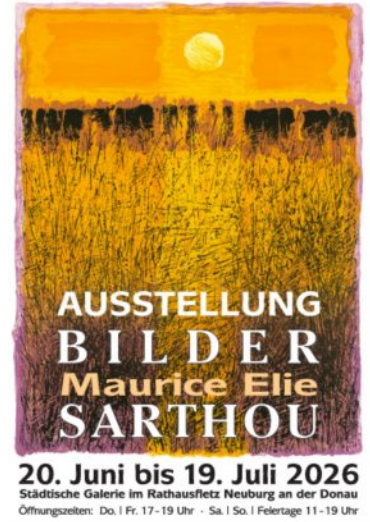


NEUBURG AN DER DONAU, GERMANY

40 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

Early summer marked a special milestone for Neuburg an der Donau, our Newcastle in Bavaria, Germany. It is now four decades of friendship with its French twin town, Sète. The anniversary was celebrated in style with a formal ceremony on June 19th, attended by dignitaries and a delegation from Sète. The event honours the enduring cultural and economic ties that have flourished since the partnership began in 1986.

The festivities continued next day with the Sèter Weinfest, and guests enjoyed live music by Gilles Amiel, a renowned musician from Sète, alongside performances by Neuburg's own Stadtkapelle, the Fanfarenzug, and the summer dance group Famestep/ Burgfunken. The programme was a lively blend of traditions from both cities including wine from the South of France and other specialties. Adding an artistic touch, there is an exhibition of works by the celebrated painter Maurice Elie Sarthou—a native of Sète. The display offers a visual tribute to the shared cultural heritage that has enriched both communities over the past 40 years.



Neuburg's Historic Prison: A Chapter Closes

The Justizvollzugsanstalt Neuburg, a landmark in the Upper Old Town, has stood as a silent witness to centuries of change.

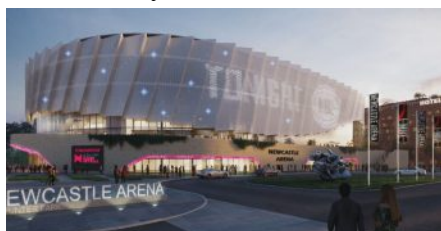
Originally a royal riding school, it later served as a grain store for the Jesuits and the Knights of Malta before becoming a prison.

Its imposing gabled structure, with its richly decorated portal and parts of the old city wall, reflects a history of shifting purposes - from stabling the horses of the nobility to a place of justice.

After generations of service, the prison closed its doors at the end of 2025, as operating it was no longer economically viable. Now, the Free State of Bavaria is preparing to sell the property, marking the end of an era for this historic site. Yet its walls, protected as a cultural monument, continue to tell the story of a building that has adapted to the needs of its time from horses and grain to incarceration. The question now is: What's next? Investors are being sought to reimagine its future—whether as a student dormitory, a boutique hotel, or perhaps something entirely unexpected and, perhaps soon, a new beginning?

NEWCASTLE, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

The City of Newcastle has welcomed a \$12 billion (€ 7 billion) commitment by the New South Wales State Government to build the State's next generation of trains in the Hunter (the Newcastle area). The investment will deliver a new state-owned manufacturing facility that will anchor more than 30 years of passenger train building in the region, generating hundreds of jobs and boosting the greater Newcastle economy. The site is expected to employ up to 780 workers in construction and 550 ongoing jobs in the facility and supply chains. Newcastle Lord Mayor Gavin Morris said the decision will reinvigorate the Hunter's great train-building tradition.



This adds to a recent commitment of almost \$15 million (€ 7 billion) towards finalising the design of a new entertainment and conference centre, a 12,000 seat, \$500 million (€ 580m) arena, which is forecast to entertain more than 640,000 people and generate almost \$41 million (€48m) annually for the local economy. Known as Newcastle Arena, it will host international entertainment acts and conferences, as well as provide a home to professional basketball and netball franchises playing in national competitions.

GALLERY BREAKS ALL RECORDS

Right is one of the rarely seen works by internationally-recognised First Nations artist Brian Robinson in a new exhibition at Newcastle Art Gallery; there is also a debut solo show by Newcastle-based artist Tiyan Baker.

Since it reopened in February as the largest public gallery in the state outside of Sydney, the gallery has welcomed over 80,000 visitors, already surpassing the previous annual visitation record.

Pictured are Tiyan Baker, Gallery Director Lauretta Morton and Brian Robinson.



NOVÉ ZÁMKY, SLOVAKIA

RECOGNISING - AND ENTERTAINING - BLOOD DONORS

Nové Zámky is proud of the way that its citizens willingly donate blood - and, as in previous years, regular donors have been presented with a cultural programme. A concert of Slovak pop-opera trio La Gioia was held on 10th June at the Royal Riding Hall, and over 700 spectators enjoyed a wonderful musical experience.



On 11 June representatives of the Slovak Red Cross, the National Transfusion Station in Nové Zámky and the Mayor presented golden and diamond Janský's plaques, as well as the Medal of MUDr. Ján Knazovický, to the voluntary blood donors.

On the occasion World Blood Donors' Day, 15 June, voluntary blood donation then took place at the Town Hall, where the donors included Mayor Otokar Klein (*see left*).

FAMILY CELEBRATIONS

A two-day event full of music, entertainment and splendid atmosphere was held on 30th April and 1st May in the park on the Bernolák square. Many families came to these festive days thanks to enjoy a rich programme – cultural and dance performances, concerts, children's attractions, workshops and mascots.



It was another much-enjoyed annual Castrum Revue in Nové Zámky at the end of June, with top performers from around the world.

On June 4, the final of the 34th year of the nationwide literary competition "Why I like Slovak, why I like Slovakia" took place in Nové Zámky. Every year, the event supports the creative relationship of children and youth to the Slovak language, culture, history and national traditions through their own literary work. The competition is organized by the National Institute of Education and Youth, the Ministry of Culture and the Association of Slovak Writers.



Also involved is the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad for the international element where 115 works from Slovak communities in ten countries competed. The evaluation was attended by the former President of the Slovak Republic, Ivan Gašparovič.

NEWCASTLE, ONTARIO, CANADA



The star attraction for the annual Canada Day celebrations in Newcastle, Ontario was Canadian Champion football (soccer) freestyler Ollie Clark, also freestyler Sofi Rodriquez, showing off their skills and tricks. With Canada doing well in the World Cup, this was very timely! As well as the Canada Kicks soccer, there were vendors, a food alley, stage performances of dance and music, face painting, balloon twisting, free inflatables and cardio drumming - and a library story inside the (air conditioned!) Community Hall.



DID YOU KNOW ? Newcastle is known as the "Apple Capital of Canada" because it is home to Algoma Orchards, the largest apple producer and processor in the country. The unique microclimate—created by the warming effects of Lake Ontario—provides ideal conditions for growing millions of kilos of apples annually.

JAUNPILS, LATVIA

Museum Night and the 35th anniversary of Jaunpils museum

On May 23, the traditional Museum Night took place throughout Latvia, including in Jaunpils. This year, however, the occasion was particularly special, as Jaunpils Museum celebrated its 35th anniversary.



The origins of the museum date back to 1991, when the then head of Jaunpils parish, Ligita Gintere, recognized the need to preserve and promote the local history and cultural heritage of the area. She presented the idea to the parish council, whose members voted in support of establishing a museum for the community.

The first museum director was Ligija Rutka, a talented historian and dedicated researcher who devoted many years to the institution. Through her tireless work, she made an invaluable contribution to the study, preservation, and systematisation of Jaunpils history, laying the foundations for the museum's development and success.

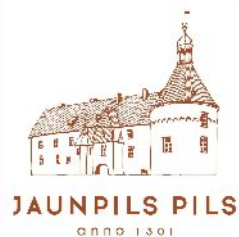
The anniversary celebration brought together residents, guests, friends, and supporters of the museum. Visitors enjoyed guided tours of the museum exhibitions, family activities, a ceremonial gathering in the castle courtyard, and a captivating handpan concert by Marcis Palsins. Younger visitors were entertained by the clown girl Pendele, who filled the evening with laughter, joy, and memorable moments.

Throughout the event, guests had the opportunity to explore the 725-year-old Jaunpils castle with a guide, take part in an escape game set in the castle's historic cellar, mint commemorative coins, visit the Jaunpils Lutheran church, the local library, the historic watermill, and the Crafts house, meet traditional craftsmen, and participate in various creative workshops and activities.

Jaunpils says: "We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us in celebrating this important milestone. We are grateful for the warm greetings, kind wishes, and support received both in person and from those who shared their congratulations from afar. And as we celebrate 35 years of Jaunpils museum, we look back with gratitude on the dedication of those who built and nurtured this institution, and we look forward to continuing its mission of preserving and sharing the rich history and cultural heritage of Jaunpils for generations to come."

Jaunpils Prayer breakfast

On May 8, Jaunpils hosted its sixth annual Prayer Breakfast at the castle (pils), bringing together local residents and guests for an inspiring occasion of fellowship, reflection and gratitude. This year's event focused on the strength, calling, and significance of women in families, communities, and future generations. Participants reflected on the quiet yet powerful influence of women; their ability to encourage, nurture, support, and bring hope where it is most needed. Held two days before Mother's Day, the gathering served as a heartfelt reminder to express gratitude to mothers, wives, grandmothers, daughters, and all women whose dedication, care, and love enrich our lives and make our communities stronger.



The Prayer Breakfast has become a cherished tradition in Jaunpils, offering an opportunity to pause amidst the demands of everyday life, to listen, share stories, engage in meaningful conversations, and strengthen bonds within the community. An important part of this tradition is charitable giving. Each year, participants contribute donations to support a local cause. This year, funds were raised for a single mother who is raising three talented daughters, all students of Jaunpils Primary School. The community's generosity will provide meaningful support to the family and reflects the spirit of compassion and solidarity that defines the event.

Jaunpils is grateful to everyone who participated and helped make this gathering special. The message is: "May the memories, inspiration, and sense of gratitude gained during the morning continue to encourage greater kindness, understanding, and care for one another throughout the year."

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, UNITED KINGDOM



Europe's largest funfair gathered again on Newcastle's Town Moor for ten days in June - and the wonderful weather made it the most successful for years. Lord Mayor Henry Gallagher rang the bell to start the festivities.

Of more than 400 rides and attractions, the star turn was *Elevate 85*, an 85-metre (279ft) tall Star Flyer, the world's tallest mobile ride.

It spins riders high in the air, offering panoramic views across the city.



And the Lord Mayor had earlier started the 2026 edition of the famous Blaydon Race. Over 5000 runners take part every year and thousands more are disappointed. It's a 9km fast road race from Newcastle centre to the nearby town of Blaydon, dating back many years and celebrating the horse races in Blaydon of over 150 years ago. *The Blaydon Races* is a song that supporters of Newcastle United football club sing.

The Last Ship is a passionate, political musical written by locally-born musician Sting. It tells the story of unemployed Tyneside shipbuilders who take over a closed factory to build one final vessel. The production was premiered in New York in 2014, then had a homecoming run in Newcastle in 2018.

A new production of the musical has been in Amsterdam, Brisbane and Paris this year - and at the New York Metropolitan Opera, bringing Broadway-style rock and folk into an operatic framework for the first time. Staging *The Last Ship* at the Met was widely celebrated as a triumph in scale because of the breathtaking physical set. The sheer size of the iconic venue made it appear as if a massive, physical ship had been built right on stage.

The Last Ship will be running in London's West End for the first time, in September.



It was quite a day at Newcastle's historic Grainger Market as 24 young entrepreneurs came together for the regional final of the Young Traders Market 2026. From unique handmade products to delicious homemade treats, visitors enjoyed a great showcase of local talent and creativity, accompanied by performances from Prudhoe Community Band. Congratulations to Ava from Wilou Designs, who was crowned North East Young Trader of the Year 2026 – a fantastic achievement and a testament to the talent and ambition of the area's young traders.



NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME, UNITED KINGDOM

A new children's art exhibition in Newcastle celebrates the life of Britain's longest-serving monarch. Outstanding depictions of corgis, horses and Paddington Bear are among 60 winning entries in a *Britain in Bloom* painting competition – organised by the Borough Council – currently on display. The theme of the contest, "The Life of Queen Elizabeth II", invited youngsters to think about the many aspects of the late Queen's life and her connection to the natural world during the year in which she would have celebrated her 100th birthday. There were over a thousand entries from 18 primary, secondary and special schools across the borough. The Dudson class – a group of 12 and 13-year-olds from Bluebell School – was crowned victorious in the over 10s section for an eye-catching 3D representation made from recycled materials including newspaper cuttings.



Danes Donate Hair to Bring Nyborg's Kings and Queens Back to Life

NYBORG DENMARK

A large number of people have signed up to donate hair and beards to the kings and queens of Nyborg Castle! Five Danish kings and queens are currently being reconstructed as lifelike human figures. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Nyborg Castle was one of Denmark's most important royal castles. Soon, five historical kings and queens will return to the castle.



The Swedish sculptor Oscar Nilsson is currently working on recreating the five kings and queens. He has already brought historical figures to life for museums in many parts of the world. Normally, he bases his lifelike reconstructions on preserved skulls and skeletons of people from the past. He must now create realistic interpretations of the kings and queens of Nyborg Castle — both their physical appearance and their personal presence – based on written sources and painted portraits.

To make the sculptures as authentic as possible, the museum at Nyborg Castle called for donors willing to provide hair and beards for the historical kings and queens. More than 70 long-haired and long-bearded Danes have responded. Nine donors have been selected and had their hair cut. Strand by strand, Oscar Nilsson will now attach hair and beards to his sculptures in a careful and time-consuming process!



Danehof is a major three-day medieval festival held annually in early July in Nyborg, Denmark. It recreates Denmark's medieval parliament (the original "Danehof" assemblies of the 13th to 15th centuries) with jousting tournaments, authentic market stalls, historical reenactments, and traditional food and drink. Here are images from this year's Danehof.



HERCEG NOVI, MONTENEGRO



In a truly dramatic setting, the world-famous Canadian singer **Bryan Adams** performed a special "Bare Bones" acoustic concert at the historic Kanli Kula Fortress in Herceg Novi, our "Newcastle" in Montenegro on 26 June. It was the opening concert of the 20th international Guitar Art Summer Fest.



Kanli Kula is a fortress with a stunning open-air amphitheatre. The name is of Turkish origin, and means "bloody tower", built by the Turks in 1539. The Venetians made additions in 1687, soon after conquering Herceg Novi. The inside was restored into an open-air amphitheatre in 1966. It seats over 1000 spectators, and hosts many other cultural events, including the Herceg Novi Film Festival, the most important in Montenegro. "With this concert by Bryan Adams, Herceg Novi has joined the ranks of European and world locations where the very biggest stars perform", said the President of the Municipality, Stevan Katic.

Thanks for the photos to Herceg Novi Tourism Board - Turistička organizacija Herceg Novi.



NEW TWINNING FOR HERCEG NOVI

The President of the Municipality of Herceg Novi, Stevan Katic (*right in photo*), and the Mayor of the Polish city of Lobez, Pjotr Čvikla, have signed a memorandum to twin their cities in the Town Hall in Lobez.

NEWCASTLE, SOUTH AFRICA

In Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, it was another great Winter Festival - yes, it's winter there! There was great music, rides, sports, exhibits and more, with national performers but also showcasing local talent and community spirit - with youth at the forefront!



PRIDE IN LOCAL HERITAGE AND CULTURE

In March, representatives of the Municipality of Nyukhasela visited Mntimande primary school in Blaauwboch, part of our Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal, where there was an important event to remember the history of the war between the English and the Zulu kingdom. The event aimed at educating students and the community about the importance of history and keeping the Zulu culture alive.

The event was attended by neighbouring Nyukhasela Municipality employees who work at Fort Amiel Museum. Museum Director Louis Eksteen emphasised that learning about the English and Zulu war helps young people to understand their history and be proud of their nationalism.

School students presented speeches, theatre games, traditional dances showing different events of the war, which was fought in 1879. Two famous battles of the war were the Zulu victory at Isandlwana and the British defence at Rorke's Drift. Visitors to Newcastle can learn about the war at the museum. Fort Amiel was built by the British as a fort and "look-out post" during the run-up to the war. The fort is positioned on a knoll overlooking the Ncandu River, with views of the Drakensberg mountain range and the town of Newcastle.

The school event was a great success and highlights the importance of keeping history alive among the students. This campaign to teach history will move to other schools, where there will be similar teaching events about the war between the English and the Zulus.



The annual Renova Music Festival has taken place at our **New Castle in Pennsylvania, USA**. It's a two-week festival of national renown that aims to foster the development of pre-professional musicians from across the United States through this annual series of instructional sessions and public performance. It provides cultural enrichment to the community in New Castle and the wider Lawrence County.

USA

May 25th was Memorial Day in the USA, remembering and honouring the brave men and women who died in the service of the country during wartime. As in previous years, the ceremony and parade in **New Castle, Indiana** was one of the most significant in the state. Speakers included Mayor Greg York (*left in photo*) and our Newcastles of the World friend Nate LaMar, Military Academy Liaison Officer (*right*).



AKHALTSIKHE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

The recent television series of "Race Across The World" by the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) has contestants Mark and Margo reaching Akhaltsikhe, our "Newcastle" in the Republic of Georgia!
Here is a montage of shots from the programme.



MESKHETI IN TURKEY

The latest prestigious engagement for Akhaltishke's folklore ensemble "Meskheti" was at the International Folklore Festival in Bartin, Turkey in June. They are wonderful ambassadors for Akhaltsikhe and for Georgia through their music.



In Akhaltsikhe, June 30 is Shalva Akhaltsikheli Commemoration Day, remembering the 13th Century military hero and martyr. This year the day was celebrated in a larger and very different way, with truly spectacular events in the magnificent setting of Rabati castle. Those attending were taken back to that era, with a performance of Khridol warriors, an ancient market, wonderful costumes, traditional music from a full orchestra and chorus, and dancing with authentic choreography. On this Facebook link you can see a 60 second film of the event and the honorary citizenship presentations.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1367593091913675>

KOTA BHARU, MALAYSIA

From 16 June, the bespoke local low cost airline Airasia began direct flights from Kota Bharu Airport to Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Kelantan state government began to promote Kota Bharu in Jakarta via a Kelantan Day which was held in the Sheraton Hotel on 14th May.

The Chief Minister of Kelantan launched the programme which targeted Indonesian tourists to visit Kelantan to explore the richness and uniqueness of Kelantan's culture, food, heritage and nature.



Happy Travellers !

YOUTH

Findlay Shaw from Newcastle upon Tyne was with other young people from different Newcastles in early May and has written this report.

“In May, I had the pleasure to attend the Europe Youth Mini-Summit in **Neuchâtel, Switzerland**, organised by PJNE (Le Parlement des Jeunes de la Ville de Neuchâtel) and the City of Neuchatel. It was a great opportunity to catch up with and meet new friends from Neuchâtel, Jaunpils, Nové Hradý, Nové Zámky, and Herceg Novi.

“On the first day we were able to explore the beautiful city of Neuchâtel through a tour focusing on the transformational Belle Epoque period, a boat ride on the lake, ride on a funicular to a viewing platform, and we ended the day with a fondue night.

“On the second day we got down to work, creating a presentation for Europe day to answer the question: “What kind of Europe for young people?” The presentation was then delivered to local dignitaries and guests.

To prepare this we discussed a range of issues that matter to young people in our Newcastles and came up with a shortlist of 10 issues. We further reduced this down to three areas: Social Media, Mental Health, and Youth Voice.

“To develop the different areas, we split into three groups. I was in the youth voice group and we ended up building our section around the differences in the involvement of youth voice across our Newcastles and the effects of that.



“From this conversation representatives at the summit agreed that the NOTW Youth Council should have “developing youth voice across member municipalities” as one of its key missions.

“Leading from this, the two days spent together provided an amazing opportunity to further develop the NOTW Youth Council and a true motivation to make it the best it can be clearly emerged.

We welcome any support from adults across NOTW in the final steps to create the Youth Council.

“Overall, the summit allowed us to reflect on our experiences as young people in Europe, further develop the NOTW Youth Council, and enjoy the amazing culture and exceptional hospitality of Neuchatel. It was an aspiration from Jaunpils for the youth of NOTW to meet up more regularly outside conference, and this is clearly being enacted and should continue.

Perhaps most valuable though was the opportunity to reunite with friends created at past conferences as well as create new ones - after all NOTW rests on the friendship among members”.

Strong associations create strong young people!

According to a recent survey, **Nyborg**, our Newcastle in **Denmark** (42%) is above the national average (35%) when it comes to young people who are members of an association. This is no coincidence. Among other things, it is borne by a strong and persistent interaction between the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Department in Nyborg Kommune and a committed association life carried by volunteer leaders, coaches and enthusiasts. In particular, the city’s leisure consultants play an important role in supporting and developing the framework for the associations, so that even more young people find their way into the communities.

And it works. Because when young people are part of an active association life, we also see a positive knock-on effect: fewer people smoke and drink. Nyborg says a big thank you to all of you in the associations who create meaningful communities for our young people every day.

Chrismie Mostert has just been crowned Teen Model World 2026 after travelling to Bogotá, Colombia, where she proudly represented **Newcastle** and **South Africa** at the prestigious Mini Model World 2026 competition.



During her current reign as Miss Teen Universe South Africa, 16 year-old Chrismie became a Red Cross ambassador and helped establish the Brain Bloom Foundation, which aims to advocate for and educate people about learning difficulties.



She was welcomed home to Newcastle by a group of young traditional dancers.

Thanks to Newcastle Advertiser for the photos.

SPORT

At the **South Africa** Japan Karate Association national finals in May, five competitors from the **Newcastle Dojo** won medals and were awarded their national colours: Aiden du Plessis: bronze for kumite; Jade Chuttergoon: bronze for kata; Marjohané Swart: gold for kata and bronze for kumite; Nathan Kemp: silver for kata; Sandiswa Latha: silver for kumite and bronze for kata. Congratulations to them all.



Among the rich sports traditions of **Nové Zámky**, chess occupies a special place. The city has given Slovak chess a number of excellent players, among them **Ján Bresták**, who was an important figure in local and national chess life for many decades, and who has died. **Ján Bresták** was born in 1949 in **Nové Zámky** and was a holder of the title of **FIDE Master (FM)**, which is awarded by the **International Chess Federation FIDE**. His name was known not only in **Nové Zámky**, but also in chess circles in **Slovakia** and in the surrounding countries. Since the 1980s, he has regularly competed in Slovak championships, team competitions and international tournaments. According to available statistics, he played more than three hundred official competitive games and met many strong international masters and grandmasters behind the chessboard.



HERCEG NOVI ANGLERS HOOK MEDALS

A reception has been held in **Herceg Novi, Montenegro** for novice anglers who have just won silver and bronze medals at the **World Boat Fishing Championship**. Sport fishermen "Igala" won silver and fishermen "Baošić" bronze.

Montenegro is a major global destination for boat angling championships, primarily hosted in the coastal town of **Igalo**, within **Herceg Novi** municipality, **Igalo** was the destination for the twin world club championships of both **Seniors** and **Juniors**. **Team Croatia** won the gold, while **Ivan Galzina (Croatia)** was individual champion.



At one of the best junior athletics meetings in Europe, in **Mannheim, Germany** in June, **Peter Csikós** of **Nové Zámky, Slovakia** won the 800m run. He is pictured on the podium. Last year he took second place with 1:52, which this year he improved to 1:51.24. His target is the **World Under-20 Championships** in **Eugene, USA** in August.

GREENING SPORTS FACILITIES

The **SINERGY** project (Sport Facilities Green Energy) is an EU-funded cross-border initiative aimed at boosting energy efficiency and promoting sustainable management in public sports infrastructure across **Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro**. In **Montenegro**, the project specifically targeted the **Igalo Sports Centre** in the municipality of **Herceg Novi**. Key interventions and results include infrastructure upgrades. Over €360,000 was invested in modernizing the facility with modern LED lighting - upgrading the main sports hall and auxiliary grounds with new, highly efficient smart lighting systems, and implementing advanced **DMX** dynamic lighting management and smart benches with information totems.

The final conference of the **SINERGY** international project was held in **Herceg Novi**, hosted by the mayor.



WALKING - AND RUNNING - FOR PEACE



Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

We reported last year on a Race for Peace event that took place in Soweto, South Africa, also supported by our Newcastles in Switzerland and Japan. This year, a much bigger event took place on 16 June, which was exactly 50 years since the 1976 Soweto youth uprising in South Africa when many lost their lives. There were walks and runs in many "Newcastles", honouring the courage of young people and their fight for equality, education and human rights. Today, this movement is inspiring young people around the world to become positive change makers. The event is based on the Ubuntu philosophy: "I am because we are." It reminds us that our power lies in mutual respect, cooperation and care for each other, and our common humanity.



Newcastle, South Africa



Neuchâtel, Switzerland



Nové Zámky, Slovakia



Shinshiro Japan



Jaunpils, Latvia

Mothers of Soweto - 16th June 1976

A poem by **Tahmina Ali** of Newcastle upon Tyne for the Race for Peace and to commemorate the significance of the date.

I think about the mother
of seventeen-year-old Hastings Ndlovu,
the first student,
the first boy— child
to be shot and killed that day.

I wonder if she still waits at her doorway,
eyes fixed on the road
as evening gathers itself around the houses,
listening for footsteps,
for the off-key humming
of a boy no longer coming home?

Does she still fold and refold
his school uniform
between hands worn thin by grief?

I know decades have passed.
I know grief changes shape.
But as a mother,
I cannot stop myself
from reaching across oceans
towards her.

My daughter turned four today.
This morning I buttoned her coat,
kissed the crown of her head,
watched her run ahead of me
laughing at pigeons.

And somewhere inside me
a question opened its mouth—
How does a mother survive
when memory becomes
the only place her child still grows?

Do her fingers trace
the empty lines of his notebooks,
imagining essays unwritten,
dreams abandoned mid-sentence?

I think of twelve-year-old Hector Pieterse.
A child. A body no heavier than hope.
Pierced by a bullet
fired from the heavy hand
of a coward behind a badge

His school shoes touched that road
for the last time.
His march ended in the dust—
But his name, lives.

More than seven hundred mothers
lost children in the Soweto Uprising.
Seven hundred doorways.
Seven hundred dinner tables.
Seven hundred bedrooms
where silence moved in and never left.

Soweto buried its children.
But those children planted something too.
Defiance.
Courage.
The stubborn belief
that education should open doors,
That language should be liberation,
That young voices matter, regardless of colour.

So now,
we carry the march forward.
Turning a thousand separate footsteps
into one shared stride.
From township roads in Soweto
to Newcastle's cobbled streets.

For every student who marched
towards Orlando Stadium
carrying books,
questions,
and dreams larger than the lives
they had been denied.

And I think about how far courage travels.
How a child raising their voice
beneath the South African sun
can echo decades later
through a crowd gathered
beneath a Geordie sky.

Listen.

The footsteps are still coming.
Rubber soles striking stone.
One generation stepping unapologetically
into the footprints of the next.

Ubuntu — I am because we are.

Because none of us can rest.
Not while some children know
the pitch of sirens better than lullabies.
Not while education remains
a privilege instead of a promise.

Not while racism still lingers
like cigarette stench in walls.
So we keep moving.
For Hastings.
For Hector.
For every child
whose future was stolen.

For every child
still daring to dream.
And for the mothers
who are still listening
for footsteps.

TAHMINA ALI FREELANCE SERVICES
www.tahminaali.co.uk
Instagram: @iam.tahminaali.poet
Facebook: Tahmina Ali



UPDATE FROM NEWCASTLES OF THE WORLD CO-ORDINATOR SHARON RACE ON ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER REPORT

“With Spring came the warmer weather - well, for some of our Newcastles!
It also bore the fruit of projects and ideas that we have been working on.

“Easter brought with it the opportunity of creating a greetings reel for our social media pages messages of peace and love from the Newcastle Cathedral in New South Wales; young people presenting messages from Neuchâtel and Herceg Novi; Nové Zámky and Nové Hradky showing us their Newcastles; Mayors from Newcastle upon Tyne and Ontario; giant Easter eggs in Jaunpils. Even the Easter Bunny made an appearance in Neuburg and New Castle Indiana – he certainly gets about!

“We held our first online meeting with our voluntary Education Ambassadors with representatives from Newcastle, South Africa, Neuburg an der Donau, Herceg Novi, Newcastle upon Tyne and Shinshiro. Discussions took place on several topics, including sustainable schools, agreeing on two areas that the education network can concentrate on:

1. Linking two schools together to share project ideas
 2. Larger projects for all of the Newcastles in the education network, for example photographic exchanges.
- We will meet again in the next few weeks.

“We also had our first online Castle & Fortress Managers and Administrators Network meeting recently with those in attendance from Jaunpils, Shinshiro, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nyborg and Newcastle, New South Wales. The key themes of this were:

1. Strengthening local engagement with heritage.
2. Using education to connect young people with history.
3. Using castles to foster identity, pride and a stronger sense of place.

“Over the Summer, we’ll be working hard to announce some very exciting projects for you to become involved with. Watch this space! And your emails and Facebook!

“In the meantime, if you have any ideas or suggestions to keep our network growing or if you work in education or youth affairs or cultural and heritage buildings and would like to get involved, please email me at newcastles@sharonrace.co.uk.”

Happy Summer! 🌞🌞

COMING TO A LIBRARY NEAR YOU

Another project under way is to create shelves of books in main libraries in each participating Newcastle that feature the towns and cities in our special alliance. We hope that this will stimulate interest in our Newcastles that are able to contribute books to the project, and encourage tourism, complementing our Newcastles of the World Passport scheme.

Thank you to Shinshiro who have already started in their library - *see right*.
If you would like to help us in your Newcastle with this initiative, please email us at newcastlesoftheworld@gmail.com.



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 an initiative by John Nicolaou of Newcastle upon Tyne to connect Newcastles in the English-speaking world, and by the Mayor of Shinshiro, Japan to bring the Newcastles together via the first Newcastles of the World international summit or conference in his city 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 an der Donau) in 2008; Nové Hradky (Czech Republic) in 2014 and 2023; Newcastle, Ontario, Canada in 2016; Shinshiro again in 2018, and Jaunpils (Latvia) in 2025.

Our next gathering is back in Neuburg an der Donau in 2027.

We aim to foster individual, group and civic friendships, with links through culture, education and tourism. 16