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EVERYONE AGREED - IT WAS A WEEK TO REMEMBER IN JAUNPILS!

The 2025 Newcastles of the World conference is over – and many, many thanks to Baiba Rasa and her team in **Jaunpils, Latvia** for organising and hosting a wonderful week. The photos on the following pages will give you a flavour of this special week. At the conclusion of the conference, the heads of delegations signed a joint commitment to further cooperation. At the forefront will be projects between the youth and involving schools, for example, in the development of sustainability projects.

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OUR 2027 CONFERENCE WILL BE IN NEUBURG, GERMANY

We were delighted when Dr Johann Habermeyer (*left*), Deputy Mayor of Neuburg an der Donau, announced that his city wished to invite delegates to his city for our next conference. So the conference flag passed from Jaunpils to Neuburg (*photo in centre below*). Neuburg were wonderful hosts when we were last there in Bavaria, Germany in 2008, and we look forward to 2027.



The Tour of South Bohemia 2025 is an international cycling race, taking place each September, It's part of the World Cycling Championship, also the second most important race and longest stage race in road cycling in the **Czech Republic**. The 168km stage two of the race this year began in **Nové Hradky** and it was Mayor Vladimir Hokr who fired the starting gun!



ON YOUR BIKE !

On 7th September, the 9th race of the All Japan Team Cycling Federation Pro Tour was held in **Shinshiro**, with 100 riders from 18 teams racing through a 94.8 km mountain course. Shinshiro City has been tentatively selected as the venue for the cycling road race events at the 20th Asian Games next year!





The dramatic medieval castle of Jaunpils where most sessions were held



Latvia's Foreign Minister Baiba Braze opens the conference



Our hosts from Jaunpils - champions for Newcastles of the World - Ligita Gintere and Baiba Rasa



Jaunpils was decorated with the national flags of the countries that were present



Delegates gathered in the Great Hall of Jaunpils Castle for the opening event



Delegates enjoyed a spectacular display of Latvian culture in Riga on the eve of the official opening of the conference - and another visit to the beautiful capital city later in the week



A wonderful parade of the delegations through Jaunpils, with the great support of local residents

Getting down to business - the opening work session on "Respectful Ageing"





Jaunpils' annual medieval festival took place as the conference opened. Each delegation had a stall to promote their "Newcastle"



Visits to local businesses, to the Lutheran church and to House of Crafts to see the weaving under way



Visit to the UNESCO heritage town of Kuldiga, and some of the many other activities that delegates enjoyed.



Education session at Jaunpils School



Meeting of the Executive Board



Signing and sharing the communiqué at the end of the conference



The conference flag passes to Neuburg an der Donau



Music, dance and fireworks in a great week



Top Latvian rock band Dzelzs Vilks play us out !

A MESSAGE FROM OUR WONDERFUL CONFERENCE HOSTS IN JAUNPILS

Dear friends around the Newcastles,

After a full week together at the Newcastles of the World alliance conference 2025, we want to say a heartfelt thank you for the warmth, openness, and energy you brought to every work session, conversation, and shared moment.



This conference will stay in our memories not just for the inspiring talks and discussions, but also for the friendships and connections that grew stronger here.

To capture these impressions, we are preparing a conference newspaper — a small keepsake that will bring back the spirit of this week whenever you look at it.

In the middle of September you will have received the questionnaire in your email. We kindly ask you to take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire by September 30. Your feedback will help us evaluate our work, and it will also be especially valuable for our friends in Neuburg an der Donau as they prepare for the conference planned in 2027.

We are deeply grateful for your presence and contributions. We hope you found the sessions inspiring, the discussions fruitful, and the connections valuable. It has been a pleasure to welcome you, and we look forward to keeping in touch as we continue building on the ideas and collaborations sparked during conference week.

Thank you once again for being an essential part of this journey!

Sincerely yours

Friends in Jaunpils



The **Shinshiro** Summer Fireworks Festival was held in Shinshiro City, **Japan**, on 13 August. Almost 100 stalls lined the streets, and many visitors from both inside and outside the city enjoyed the fireworks and the festive atmosphere. The photo on the left below shows handmade “teru teru bozu”, traditional Japanese paper dolls made by local children to wish for clear, rain-free weather during the festival!



Newcastle NE1 Limited, the Business Improvement Company for **Newcastle upon Tyne**, UK, brought extra summer colour to the city’s Quayside with this stunning mural.



The annual “Fireworks Fest” brought the crowds out again in July in **New Castle Pennsylvania**. New Castle is known as the “Fireworks Capital of America” being home to two local fireworks companies of international stature - Pyrotecnico (sponsors of the Fireworks Fest) and Zambelli.



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 Newcastles together via the Newcastles 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 Hradý (Czech Republic) in 2014, Newcastle, Ontario, Canada in 2016, Shinshiro again in 2018, Nové Hradý 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.

A SUMMER OF FESTIVALS

The wonderful annual Buskers Festival in **Neuchâtel**, our Newcastle in Switzerland, was again an August highlight. It included performances in the villages of the municipality, plus five days with a range of artists performing in the city in the streets of the pedestrian zone.



One of the summer attractions in the South Bohemian region of the **Czech Republic** is the **Nové Hradý** classical music festival, which has just celebrated its tenth year. The festival has been built around the performances of celebrated violinist Jaroslav Svěcený. He has recorded more than forty CDs of the world's violin repertoire. After studying at the Prague Conservatory and the Academy of Performing Arts, he became not only a soloist, but also an expert on historical violins and violin construction and is a court-appointed expert in the field.

Most of all he is a populariser and promoter of classical music and occasionally performs with artistic ensembles from the field of popular music. In 2020, he was awarded the Golden Plaque of the President of the Republic. Other performers this year included Lukáš Sommer / guitar, Nora Lubbadová / piano and Jaroslav Pokuta / accordion.



In September it was time again for the "Burning Mountain" festival in **New Castle, Colorado, USA**, located on the western slope of the Rockies.

The mountains, rich with coal surrounding the town, were the impetus for New Castle's development into the bustling mining community it became in the late 1880s. Following explosions at the Vulcan coal mine in 1913 and 1918, with many deaths, the mine was closed. The Vulcan coal seam is still burning in Coal Ridge, south of the Colorado River, and the Consolidated Mine still burns in "Burning Mountain" (the Hogback) over 100 years later. The heat from the fires destroys vegetation and melts snow along the long scars in the Hogback.

The "Burning Mountain Festival" is New Castle's signature event which takes place over two days in September to remember the Town's heritage. There's music, a 5k run and walk, bike race, car show, contests such as log-splitting and pie-eating, lots of food and craft vendors - and a community parade down Main Street.



"Airplanes and Automobiles" (formerly known as "Wings and Wheels") returned to New Castle Municipal Airport (**New Castle Pennsylvania, USA**) on 23 August. This free event, celebrating things with wings and wheels, brought in large crowds, with the helicopter and aeroplane rides especially popular.

The airport is publicly-owned airport and is controlled by the Lawrence County Airport



The blessing of the planes



The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award award five decades of safe flying was given to Christine St. Onge at the event (right).



MORE FESTIVALS AROUND OUR "NEWCASTLES"

The **Herceg Novi** Film Festival – the national **Montenegro** Film Festival - takes place annually in summer and holds a special place in the cultural life of the country. At the festival, film-makers are celebrated hailing from Southeastern Europe, from Spain to Romania, from the Mediterranean to the Balkans.

The 38th Festival took place in late August, with the winning film "DJ Ahmet" from North Macedonia, Czech Republic, Serbia, and Croatia, directed by Georgi M. Unkovski. The event also featured the Montenegro Film Rendezvous (MFRV) 2025, an industry platform for film professionals.



The Festival this year awarded the prestigious "Milan Zmukic" Award to the legendary writer, screenwriter and director Dušan Kovačević (*left*), one of the most significant authors of Yugoslav and regional cinema, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to film art.

The Festival was opened by the Kovačević in the dramatic setting of Kanla Tower (*above, left*), and a few days later, a special evening was held in his honour. The accolade is named in honour of the famous Yugoslavian film producer and long-term director of festival and film institutions, Milan Zmukić, who founded the Yugoslav Film Directing Festival, today's Herceg Novi Film Festival.



The 46th Summer Academy of Arts has taken place in **Neuburg an der Donau**, our "Newcastle" in Bavaria, **Germany**. It's a unique mixture of music and art, a popular and well-established holiday academy that attracts lecturers, performers and participants from all over the world.

The course programme ranges from jazz and pop, classical and early music, visual arts to world music and dance.



In addition to the popular courses for adults, the Academy also offers courses specifically for children and young people where they can try their hand at crafts, modelling, playing music and artistic design, including painting, graphics and sculpture.



The youth theatre is the place for anyone who has always wanted to be on stage – the rehearsed play is presented in front of an audience on the final day of the Academy.

"Poetic **Nové Hrady**" was the title of the a summer programme in the town, our "Newcastle" in the **Czech Republic** - welcoming and encouraging poetry contributions from local people. In the past, poetry has occasionally appeared in the town's cultural platform, but never featuring the work of residents and never quite like this - displayed around the town square!

There was also a friendly "poetic triathlon" in the gallery Koželužno, and a performance by the folk band Pozvolna playing original songs by band member Martin Kápar. The message to residents was "if you already have something in your drawer at home, poetry you would like to share with others, come along and read - but if you don't want to read it yourself, we'll give it to a "spare reciter" !



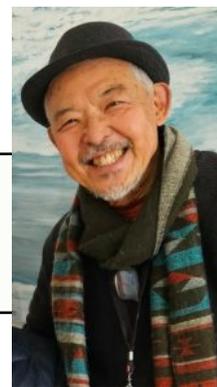
PEOPLE

Many congratulations to Kenneth Muhs, the Mayor of **Nyborg**, our “Newcastle” in **Denmark**, who at the city council at the end of August received the Knight's Cross for his many years of work in municipal politics. The award was presented to the Mayor (*right*) by his Deputy Michael Gertsen and is given for exceptional contributions to Danish society.



At the end of August, Tuan Haji Azi Rahimee Bin Haji Mohamed, President of the **Kota Bharu – Islamic City Municipal Council (MPKB-BRI)** together with the council officials, hosted a courtesy visit to the city,

our “Newcastle” in **Malaysia**, by Mr. Noriyuki Shikata, Ambassador of Japan (*left in photo, with his host*). The purpose of this visit was to further develop friendly relations and share prospects for future cooperation on urban development, tourism and culture.



In **Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia**, local artist Hide Kobayashi who interprets landscapes around the city. has reached the final stages in a prestigious art prize, the Newcastle Club Foundation Art Prize. Hide is also a member of International Newcastle which promotes the city on an international stage.

David Faulkner, our Newcastle of the World Coordinator for many years and former Newcastle City Councillor/Leader, is to receive the award of “Honorary Freeman” of his home city. The nomination was for his work over fifty years in community/race relations, the arts and promoting internationalism. The award was approved at the September meeting of the **Newcastle upon Tyne** City Council and will be presented officially in the coming weeks. David is already an Honorary Citizen of **Akhaltzikhe**, our “Newcastle” in the Republic of Georgia, having been presented there in 2017 for his international work (*see left*).

Nicolas Meding from **Neuburg an der Donau**, our “Newcastle” in Bavaria, Germany, travelled around **Japan** for a month in the summer and visited our “Newcastle” there, **Shinshiro**, for five days.

During his stay, Nicolas (*second from the left in the photo below*) showed a great interest in history and was fascinated by the story of the Battle of Nagashino at the Nagashino Castle History Museum. He also enjoyed visiting tourist attractions such as Mt. Horaiji and the Atera Seven Waterfalls, took part in local events, and met with the Mayor, Hiroyuki Shimoe (in the centre of the photo).



TWO NEWCASTLES AND THE FUTURE OF CITY CENTRES

Associate Professor Marcus Jefferies from the University of **Newcastle** (New South Wales, **Australia**) and Professor Bob Giddings from Northumbria University (**Newcastle upon Tyne UK**) presented a paper at a major conference in Dundee (Scotland) in September as part of their ongoing research into the future of city centres. The paper’s title is *A Regenerative Strategy for Civic Precinct*, Newcastle, NSW, Australia. It investigates the challenges for the post-industrial city and proposes a strategy to help regenerate it as an enjoyable, culturally meaningful, and productive place.

Marcus (*left in the photo*) and Bob have worked together on this theme over several years now.



ENVIRONMENT



In our last issue, we covered the visit of **Denmark's** Minister of the Environment to **Nyborg** to sign a cooperation agreement supporting the city's climate protection arrangements. On 26 August, the city formally adopted its climate protection plan. The need is for the city to be climate-proofed, so that homes, critical infrastructure and businesses are protected from the water from the Great Belt in the event of a storm surge. This work is already underway and is now supported with four million kroner (half a million EUR) from the Ministry of the Environment and the National Coastal Pool. Walls and dykes will be built, and the terrain will be raised to keep the water out in the event of a storm surge.

The city of **New Castle** in the state of **Indiana, USA**, one of over 30+ "Newcastles of the World" in the USA, has been recognised by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management as an "Indiana Clean Community"

This designation recognises communities that are taking proactive, sustainable environmental actions. Henry County Solid Waste Management has partnered with *Healthy Communities of Henry County*, the Mayor's office, and several other city agencies to achieve this recognition.

Many congratulations!

Here is Mayor Greg York (in the centre) with some of the people who have contributed to this success.



On 14 August, local authority leaders, industry activists, academics and local organisations gathered in **Malaysia's** capital Kuala Lumpur for the ASUF 2025 Program (ASEAN Sustainable Urban Forum), which brings together experts and policy-makers to discuss sustainable urban development strategies.

The municipality of **Kota Bharu** (Newcastle) led an experience-sharing session on the management of solid waste, and also delivered a briefing about the city's Green City Action Plan, part of its commitment in achieving low-carbon development and strengthening the city's resilience to climate change.

Among the initiatives presented were the development of environmentally-friendly infrastructure, integrated public transport, the addition of green space, and the implementation of renewable energy projects.

The ASUF programme was attended by delegations from several Asian Countries, making it an important platform to share experiences, build collaborative networks, and plan common strategies to achieve the global sustainable development goals.



Seven venues maintained by **Newcastle-under-Lyme** Borough Council are among the sites in the United Kingdom to achieve coveted "Green Flag" status. The award scheme – managed by environmental charity *Keep Britain Tidy* under licence from the Government– recognises well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard across the UK and around the world. Queens Gardens (pictured here) is one of the borough's sites to receive this quality rating.

September 22 to October 5 is "Fairtrade Fortnight" and as usual there are a range of events in **Newcastle upon Tyne** to promote Fairtrade. When Newcastle upon Tyne became a "Fairtrade City", it was the first city in the United Kingdom to achieve this, and it has kept up its status ever since. Supporting Fairtrade in Newcastle means supporting both farmers and workers overseas, and also local businesses and organisations in Newcastle who sell Fairtrade goods.



Fairtrade is about fairer prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world who produce products such as coffee, tea, sugar, cotton, honey and fruit.

It also helps tackle climate change by supporting producers in areas of the world affected to plant trees, protect soils, and diversify their crops, so that they can continue to farm and support their families.



An advanced MOPET Belgium PET (polyethylene terephthalate - a type of plastic) recycling facility is under construction in **Neufchâteau** ("Newcastle" in the Luxembourg province).

With an expected opening in 2025 plant, this is a €68.5 million investment that will recycle 40,000 tons of plastic annually and is a significant step in fostering a circular economy for plastic packaging in the region.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE “NEWCASTLES”

Women from all corners of **Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa** gathered at the Osizweni Community Hall in Newcastle last month for a Women's Summit to celebrate the strength, resilience and contributions of trailblazing women in society. The occasion, celebrated under the theme, "Building Resilient Economies For All", aimed to promote economic empowerment and to recognise the critical role that women play in building economies, fostering cohesion and promoting sustainable development.



The programme featured an outreach session, performances and speakers, all centered around the thematic areas of women in business, management, leadership and agriculture.



The city of **Kota Bharu**, our "Newcastle" in Malaysia, celebrates the country's independence day annually at the end of August (*see left*). The events include independence poetry, dance, buskers and patriotic singing.



The Neuburg Volunteer Fire Brigade (*above, right*) in **Neuburg an der Donau**, Germany has successfully participated in the World Rescue Challenge 2025 in Croatia. In this international performance comparison, 35 teams from all over the world competed against each other to prove their skills in realistic accident scenarios.



Two new international Cooperation Agreements have been signed by **Herceg Novi**, our “Newcastle” in Montenegro. Pictured left is the extended agreement with the city of Jackson, California, USA. The historic connection began with Serbian Orthodox immigrants from Herceg Novi who settled in Jackson during the Gold Rush, leading to the establishment of the first Serbian Orthodox Church in the U.S. there. The two cities officially became Sister Cities in 2020, fostering ongoing cultural and religious ties. Herceg Novi has also just signed a new twinning agreement with East Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), formalising what has been traditional friendship between the two cities.

Cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia and the Municipality of Herceg Novi is leading to stronger support to women entrepreneurship. A delegation of the Chamber of Commerce recently visited Herceg Novi and it has been agreed that the Municipality will be the first in Montenegro to host the regional “Caravan of Women Entrepreneurship”. Also, Herceg Novi will participate in a conference on women's entrepreneurship that will be held in November, as a prelude to the important Expo Belgrade 2027- the first in a series of activities that are planned in the field of women's empowerment.

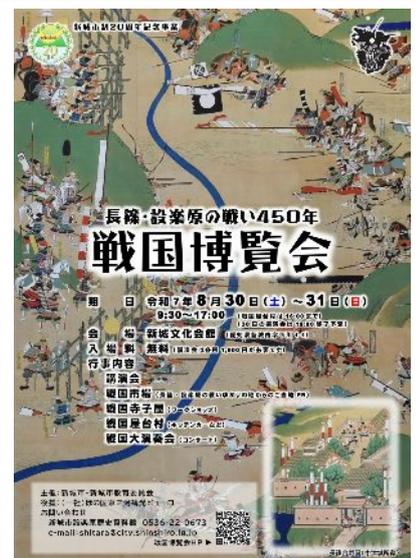


The Battle of Nagashino and Shitaragahara, a famous Japanese battle in 1575 fought between the allied forces of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu against Takeda Katsuyori, took place in what is now **Shinshiro City**. (“Newcastle”).

To commemorate the 450th anniversary of this historic battle, the Sengoku Expo was held in Shinshiro on August 30/31.

At the expo, municipalities, tourism associations, and museums connected to Nobunaga and Ieyasu showcased and sold special local products.

The event also featured lectures by historians, workshops, and concerts.



MORE NEWS



Nobody does a Harvest Festival quite as well as our friends in **Newcastle, Ontario, Canada**, with the village wonderfully decorated with the “mellow fruitfulness” of autumn (sorry, “fall”!)



Construction has begun on new student accommodation for the University of **Newcastle (Australia)**. A nine-storey building will be able to house 445 student beds across a range of room types, including studios, micro studios, twin rooms and six-bed shared apartments.



In July, the Municipal Council of **Kota Bharu-Bandaraya Islam (MPKB-BRI)**, our “Newcastle” in **Malaysia**, was pleased to receive the presence of His Excellency Tuan Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Housing and Local Government in conjunction with the “Touch of Love” Programme which is taking place around the city.

Particular highlights were visits to the famous Khadijah City Market to inspect upgraded projects for the comfort of traders and visitors, the MyKiosk project (an initiative that supports the growth of small businesses and local entrepreneurs) and a number of new housing projects. The Touch of Love Program supports a variety of housing and infrastructure projects, and also strengthens the relationship between the Federal, State and Local Authorities.



Herceg Novi Motorcade 2025 brought together bikers, motorcycle enthusiasts and music lovers from across **Montenegro** and beyond for three days at the end of August. Organised by MC “Cruiser” Motorcycle Club, the event marks a special milestone – 20 years of the club’s existence, the oldest motorcycle club in Montenegro.

The event is included in the European calendar of motorcycle rallies. The focus is on great company, and there was, as always, a unique atmosphere and unforgettable live music. The weekend featured the traditional citywide motorcycle parade and there were classic biker games with valuable prizes.



The construction of a fantastic multifunctional sports complex has been completed in **Akhaltsikhe**, our “Newcastle in the Republic of Georgia. It includes large and small swimming pools: the main pool is designed for both swimming and water polo courts, and the small pool is for public use by adults and children.

There are also includes gym, weightlifting, boxing and wrestling facilities, providing a variety of opportunities for both individual and team sports. The complex will be open for use in the coming months once the team to manage the building is in place.



CELEBRATING THE GRAPE HARVEST IN NEUCHÂTEL

The 98th Neuchâtel (Switzerland) Fête des Vendages, the Grape Harvest Festival, has just taken place on the last weekend of September, with the usual wonderful, colourful celebrations. The three day festival signifies the end of the wine harvest for the year. Festivities include traditional processions with music, flowers and wine makers' tools, a children's fancy-dress parade, concerts, dancing, fireworks - and the main flower parade on the Sunday. The region boasts a 2,000-year history of wine-making - Chasselas being the main white and Pinot Noir, the red. The festival originated more than a century ago. After long working days in the fields, local grape pickers walked from cellar to cellar to cheer on wine makers. When the harvest was complete, the wine pickers and farmers noisily accompanied the remaining grape tanks, often decorated with flowers, to the press. Spread throughout the city, there are more than 300 stands run by local companies and shopkeepers to add to the festival atmosphere. It's one of the highest attended events in the whole of Switzerland.



THE TOUR DE NEUBURG



1931 Ford A



Jaguar C-Type



In near-tropical temperatures, the Neuburg Motor Club hosted its ninth Tour de Neuburg on 15 August. A record-breaking 82 classic and modern cars took the route that started at the Wittelsbacher Golf Club in Neuburg-Rohrenfeld, and finished at the Audi Driving Centre in Neuburg an der Donau where the prizes were awarded, ranging from the team award and prizes for various car brands to the tourism and expert awards.

The cars represented not only the current well-known car manufacturers, but also long-gone brands like DKW and NSU, as well as vehicles from England, Italy, Sweden, Japan, and the USA. This year's oldest vehicle was a 1931 Ford A. This was followed by remarkable and rare English sports cars from the 1950s and 1960s. The highlight of this group was a replica of an English Jaguar C-Type sports car from the 1950s. Most of the cars in the Tour de Neuburg were from the 1960s to the 1990s. Many were still in their original condition, but several had already been restored or converted to contemporary specifications.

MARKING 200 YEARS OF RAIL TRAVEL

It was 200 years ago, on 27 September 1825 - the beginning of the world's first passenger railway service on the Stockton and Darlington Railway in north east England. Pulled by the steam engine "Locomotion No.1", which was built in the Stephenson railway factory in **Newcastle upon Tyne**, were wagons carrying coal and a passenger wagon called "Experiment".



The railway line was engineered by George Washington: The region has been celebrating this significant milestone in railway history – the 26-mile (42km) journey was the start of the modern railway as we know it today. A replica of Locomotion No.1 has been making a ceremonial journey on the line, and the Stockton & Darlington Railway 200 Festival is presenting a series of outdoor spectacles, events, exhibitions and new art commissions in the area.

HONOURING SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE

Heritage Day is a South African public holiday celebrated on 24 September. On this day, South Africans are encouraged to celebrate their culture with its great diversity and traditions.

The photo is of the celebrations in Mntimande Primary School in Blaauwbosch, Madadeni Township, **Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal**. Thanks to School Principal, our good friend Thulani Phakathi, for the photo.



CONNECTING GENERATIONS IN NOVÉ ZÁMKY

YOUTH

Samuel Laho and Matej Borik of the **Nové Zámky (Slovakia)** Youth Parliament visited the town's **Denne Centrum Seniorov (Seniors Day Centre)** to help create a new logo for the organisation.



The “wise owls”, whose activities are based at the centre, expressed their appreciation; and Samuel and Matej said “we are glad that with such activities of our youth parliament we can build better relationships between generations and bring more smiles to our city.”

August 12, International Youth Day, was celebrated with a variety of entertainment events for young people at Rabati castle in **Akhaltzikhe**, our Newcastle in the Republic of **Georgia**.



There was an opportunity to participate in music-based activities, art and craft workshops and quizzes.

The special theme was "Festival of Colours" which concluded in the evening with a gala concert.



The event was organised by **Akhaltzikhe Municipality Hall**, with the participation of the Youth Council.

BACK TO SCHOOL - BUT THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW IN JAUNPILS

Liga Eidmane-Kabaka explains:

The new school year in **Latvia** began on September 1st. In Jaunpils, pupils welcomed the new school year with joy and excitement. Every year, a particularly special moment is the ceremony of introducing the first graders, traditionally done by the older pupils. Until now, this was carried out by the 12th graders, but this year it was the 9th graders who had the honour.

Starting this school year, our school has changed its status from a full secondary school, covering grades 1–12, to an elementary school, now including only grades 1–9. This reform has been implemented due to a declining number of children.



However, even in every challenging situation, there is something positive to be found.

Due to the reform affecting our school, we have received financial support from the state amounting to 1 million euros to strengthen the elementary school level – for school renovation, modernization, and equipment.

In addition, the local municipality is contributing approximately half a million euros. The procurement process for these works has already been completed, and we hope that the renovation will begin at the beginning of October.



As a result, this school year will be more exciting for the pupils, as things will not follow the usual routine. Several classes will be held in our castle, which is a unique experience for many pupils. Additionally, school events and concerts will take place this year in the castle's large hall. The renovations are expected to be completed by the end of May 2026.

School Principal Anita Marčinkus (left) with Baiba Rasa, Head of Jaunpils and Viesatu Parish Administration.

YOUTH

A Youth in Business Expo, held in Madadeni, **Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa** in August, was a great success, as young entrepreneurs won business opportunities and funding on the spot.

During the event, a total of 350,000 rand (20,000 EUR) was handed over to 19 young entrepreneurs who underwent training through the Newcastle Municipality and National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) partnership.

Additionally, 15 young business owners received R10,000 (500 EUR) each through a business pitch competition funded by Newcastle Municipality, and NYDA, while businesses also accessed marketing opportunities through live-streaming, reaching over 100,000 viewers.



The **New Castle - Henry County Chamber of Commerce in Indiana, USA**, is a non-profit member organisation that provides support to member businesses.

It also has an eye to the businessmen and women of the future and has just completed the third year of its summertime Youth Ambassador Programme (YAP). The YAP aims to cultivate strong and engaged young leaders who will contribute to the growth and development of their communities. This is an opportunity for young people from local high schools to develop leadership skills, network with businesses and make connections that might help their future careers.

They can serve as liaisons between local businesses and the youth community, providing valuable experience in community involvement.

Nové Zámky students explore the languages of other “Newcastles”

September 26 is celebrated annually as the European Day of Languages (EDL) to promote language learning and celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe. Coordinated by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, this day raises awareness of the importance of multilingualism, encourages lifelong language learning for people of all ages, and highlights the rich tapestry of languages spoken across the continent.

Katarína Hozlárová is the Head Teacher of the Catholic United School in **Nové Zámky, Slovakia** and has been greatly involved in Newcastles of the World, including at the most recent conferences.



For EDL 2025, Katarína chose to introduce the project to the students of her school, with worksheets incorporating several tasks about different Newcastles to help them learn about them. She also prepared some words in all languages that are used in our Newcastles - but, most exciting of all she was able to link up with a school in another “Newcastle” - **Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa** and our friend Thulani Phakathi.



SPORT

The annual Sports Festival in **Neuchâtel, our Newcastle in Switzerland**, celebrated its 25th anniversary in late August. Some 12,000 people took part in the event, organized by the City's Sports Department in collaboration with more than 40 sports associations and clubs in the region. It was two free days dedicated to sports, party and togetherness and covering more than 50 disciplines for the public to try out.



The 44th Great North Run, the world's biggest half marathon, took place on 7 September, with a record 60,000 participants. Kenya's Alex Mutiso won the men's race and Sheila Chepkirui, also from Kenya, won the women's race.



The run, from **Newcastle upon Tyne** to South Shields at the coast, has been awarded a World Athletics Heritage Plaque in recognition of its contribution to sport - over 1.3 million people now having participated.



The Vegvisir Race is Northern Europe's largest doublehand sailing event and took place in **Nyborg, our Newcastle in Denmark** at the end of August. Sailors from all over Europe came to compete in distance racing in different classes, almost 200 of them in over 100 different boats.



Sailors could choose one of three lanes; a long 235 nautical mile course, a medium 151 nautical mile course and a short 95 nautical mile course. The long course was for doublehands (two people on board), while the two shorter courses were for the participation of both doubles and singlehands (two or one person on board). "Vegvisir" is an Icelandic word that means "guide" - it's also an ancient symbol that was designed to help sailors across the sea in rough weather.

The BR-Radltour is an annual bicycle tour in Bavaria, Germany for recreational bicycle riders that was established in 1990. This year, the bike tour finished in **Neuburg an der Donau**, our "Newcastle" in Bavaria. Around 1,000 cyclists arrived at Karlsplatz having completed their final stage and the arrival at the finishing line was broadcast live on regional television.

A joyful supporting program took place on Karlsplatz during the afternoon. The grand closing ceremony then took place at the Volksfestplatz, followed by a fantastic final evening with music from the Bayern 3 Band and Kamrad.



The tour arrives in Neuburg - with Mayor Bernhard Ghmeling (centre of middle photo); the riders let their hair down after the finish.

SPORT

Newcastle (Australia) golf legend Owen Beldham has been honoured with induction into the Hunter Region Sporting Hall of Fame. A lifelong member of Newcastle Golf Club since 1962, he is the only member to have competed at junior, senior, masters, and super senior levels. He made history in 1972 as the first amateur to win the state Open Championship, and his decorated career also includes representing Newcastle, New South Wales, and Australia, winning two Interstate Series titles between 1973 and 1976, competing in five state and Australian Opens, and winning the 2002 Australian Senior Championship.

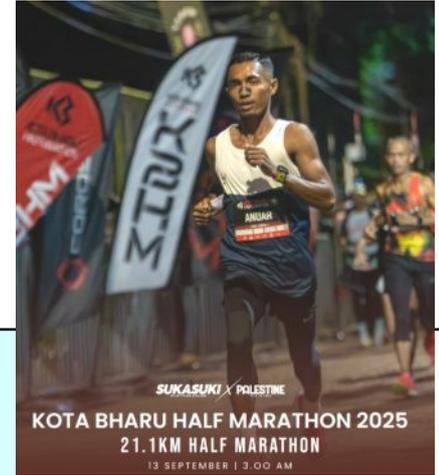


Beldham was one of five athletes honoured at the 33rd annual Hall of Fame induction at the end of August, joining Christie Dawes (wheelchair racing), Josh Valentine (rugby union), Maddison Elliott (para-swimming), and Scott Westcott (athletics). Christie, born in Newcastle (*also in the photo*) is a seven-time Paralympian who won medals in 2008, 2012 and 2016. A two-time World Champion and former world record holder, she is also a broadcaster, commentator, keynote speaker, and Chair of Wheelchair Sports Australia.



Congratulations to Miranda Chutkerashvili, from **Akhaltzikhe** who was one of the category winners in the Georgian weightlifting championships in August.

Congratulations also to Mohd Khairul Anuar Mat Yasin winner of the annual half marathon race in September in **Kota Bharu**, our Newcastle in **Malaysia**.



Early August saw the Slovak Men's and Women's Track and Field Athletics Championships in Banská Bystrica. Milan Haborák from **Nové Zámky** (*right in the photo*) won bronze medals in both the discus and shot put.

A bronze in the hammer throw was added by Ján Bencze, and Peter Csíkos was third in the 800m race. In addition, he also set a new club junior record in the 1500 m run, when he broke the 4-minute mark with a time of 3:59.99.

Two fourth and one fifth place in the 3000 m race were won by the Valentovci siblings. Margaréta and Tadeáš finished in joint fourth place, Simon was fifth. This is the first time in Nové Zámky's history that three siblings took part in the championships on the same day.

In club scoring, AC Nové Zámky finished in fourth place overall at the championships - well done to everyone!



The team from **Montenegro** has won the gold medal at the European Championships in water polo, and a significant part in their success was played by the young men from the famous PVK Jadran club in **Herceg Novi** ("Newcastle"). Their contribution was celebrated at a reception in Herceg Novi, hosted by the President of the Municipality and the President of the Herceg Novi Municipality Assembly, Stevan Katić and Miloš Konjevic.

Notable from Herceg Novi were the captain and best player of the championship Strahinja Gojkovic, Danilo Stupar, Nikola Petrovic, Miljan Boškovic and Luka Todorovic, also the team physiotherapist Vladislav Mladen.

