

Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society



Newsletter

August 2026

Guest Editor: Nick Marsh

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From the Editor

Welcome to the August edition of our Newsletter!

Dear Readers,

We are now into our "Fourth Heatwave", according to the newspapers, and our local water provider, Thames Water, has now applied a hosepipe ban on households to try and conserve the water stocks as much as possible.

According to the longer-term weather forecasts, this hot weather, with daytime temperatures of around 30°C is set to continue in the foreseeable future. However, the evenings are still relatively cool, which will make our next activity, the Treasure Hunt on 13th August, as enjoyable as it has been before! Don't forget to sign up as per the instructions in this Newsletter or in the recent email from Stella.

Other forthcoming events include a visit to Abingdon by a large group from Argentan, which will include activities at a civic level as well as at Society level. This visit is to celebrate 70 years of twinning between Argentan and Abingdon, and to sign a document to cement the relationship between our two towns for the future.

Another year of twinning is coming to a close and the time of our September Annual General Meeting is almost upon us. Details will be shortly forthcoming.

This Newsletter also has a report and photos from our summer garden party held in Michael Matthews' beautiful garden.

We are hoping to make a trip to Sint-Niklaas on 28th/29th November, details are in this Newsletter, but we need 45 people to sign up in order to make this trip viable. Please let us know if you would like to participate. We need to know by the end of August at the latest.

Enjoy the summer!

Nick Marsh

Forthcoming Events in 2026

Thursday 13 th August	Treasure Hunt
21 st – 24 th August	Anniversary Visit from Argentan
Thursday 17 th September	ADTTS Annual General Meeting
18 th – 21 st September	Mayors' Conference & Twinning Weekend in Schongau
24 th – 28 th September	Weekend Visit from Colmar
Sunday 8 th November	Laying of Twinning Wreaths on Remembrance Sunday
28 th – 29 th November	Weekend Trip to Sint-Niklaas
Sunday 20 th December	Christmas Lunch

Other events in the programme are not yet scheduled, but they include a Wine Tasting and a Games Evening. The programme may also be found on the website at <https://www.abingdonandvaletwinning.org.uk/future.htm>.

The website also has reports, with pictures, of all twinning events going back to 2007. To save typing the full domain name, the address of the website may be shortened to <http://adtts.eu/>, or simply type adtts.eu into your browser.

Forthcoming events:

The ADTTS Treasure Hunt

Thursday 13 August 2026

5.00 pm from Waitrose car park (town entrance)

It has been murder trying to plan a treasure hunt for twinning this summer, but Howard and I think we have cracked it. All that is left for you to do is to solve the clues and get to The Wheatsheaf in East Hendred at 7.45 pm in time for dinner.

This Treasure Hunt is open to all members, friends and families and there will be a charge of £5 per person, free to children under 16, which you can pay on arrival. You will need a car. Let me know if A) You could offer a lift or B) You need a lift.

We will all meet in Waitrose car park near the electric charging points at the town end at 4.45, ready to leave at 5.00. You will be provided with the clues but you will need to bring a map of South Oxfordshire to help you plan your route. As before, we have booked a room at The Wheatsheaf in East Hendred for dinner. I will have to prebook the meal, so when you book your place on the Treasure Hunt can you please let me know what you would like to eat.

Also let me know if you don't want to stay and eat.

Choose from:

Fish and chips. £18.50

Chicken Caesar salad. £16.00

Gammon, egg and chips. £17.50

Steak, Guinness and mushroom pie. £18.50

Squash, cranberry and red onion tagine. £16.50

Desserts and coffee or tea will be available. You don't have to pre-order these. At the end of the evening please pay your own bill.

So, are you a detective? Can you solve the clues whilst enjoying some of our beautiful Oxfordshire countryside?

Please register your name and those of your friends quickly. We need to have the meals booked by 6 August latest.

Contact myself or Howard:

bakehouse@supanet.com

carterhoward441@gmail.com

01235 520317

07769 326873

We look forward to sharing the evening with you.

Stella

Weekend trip to Sint-Niklaas 28th - 29th November 2026

ADTTS is organising a 2-day weekend coach trip to Sint-Niklaas on the 28th/29th November 2026.

The highlights of the trip include the chance to visit a chocolatier, the House of St Nicholas (Huis van De Sint) in Sint-Niklaas, as well the famous Christmas Market in Bruges.

Each year, during the lead-up to St Nicholas Day (6th December), the town of Sint-Niklaas celebrates this by transforming their museum to "The House of The Saint", which is dedicated to the story of St Nicholas. It is a huge attraction for children in Belgium, who come from all over the country to visit it, and the St Nicholas in residence.

We are taking a coach over there, leaving Abingdon early Saturday morning, staying at the comfortable 4-star Hotel Serwir, and will arrive back at about 8 pm on the Sunday evening.

The initial itinerary is as follows:

Saturday 28th November

- 05:30 Depart Abingdon for Euroshuttle, Folkestone
- 09:50 Shuttle crossing
- 11:15 Depart Calais (timings are local, 1 hour ahead of UK time)
- 13:15 Arrive Sint-Niklaas, Hotel Serwir
- 14:30 Visit to Chocolatier in Sint-Niklaas, watch a master chocolatier at work
- 16:00 Opportunity to visit The House of the Saint
- Evening free in Sint-Niklaas, shopping, restaurants, cafés, etc.

Sunday 29th November

- 09:15 Depart hotel for Bruges after superb buffet breakfast
- 10:15 Arrive Bruges, visit Christmas market, opportunity for horse and carriage tour, canal boat ride.
- 15:15 Depart Bruges for Calais and Shuttle (supermarket stop for Xmas shopping)
- 17:30 Arrive Folkestone, depart for Abingdon
- 20:30 Arrive Abingdon

All timings are approximate at the moment and are subject to fine-tuning.

Accommodation:

Bed and breakfast in the 4-star Hotel Serwir, Sint-Niklaas, in twin/double/family rooms.

Cost:

We envisage the cost to be approx. £165 per person, and for children sharing a room with parents approx. £155. (Entrance tickets for the House of the Saint approx. €20). The cost is not yet finalised, and may fluctuate slightly depending on exchange rates.

We anticipate that the places may well be taken up very quickly, so if you are interested, please let Nick Marsh know as soon as possible (nickqgmarsh@gmail.com) tel. 07745 440047.



House of the Saint



Canal boat ride, Bruges



Carriage ride, Bruges

Past Event – Garden Party

Thursday 2nd July



photos: Brian Read

This year's annual Garden Party was held on a warm and sunny evening in Michael Matthews' beautiful garden, where around thirty members and friends enjoyed a delightful gathering. The garden was looking beautiful.

The attendees enjoyed fruit mocktails and prosecco from the well-stocked garden bar. To accompany the liquid refreshment there was an outstanding array of canapés and assorted bites, skilfully prepared by Nikki, Rosemary, Stella and Susan.

Our grateful thanks go once again to Michael for allowing us to host this event in his splendid garden!

NM

Visitors from Argentan

From Friday 21st August to Monday 24th August Abingdon will be welcoming around 40 visitors from our twin town Argentan, to celebrate 70 years of twinning between Argentan and

Abingdon. Argentan, Normandy has been twinned with Abingdon since 1956 and is our oldest twinning.

The visitors will include delegates at the civic level who will be meeting with our Mayor and other civic dignitaries to sign documents confirming the continuation of the twinning bond between our two towns.

There will also be activities at society and church twinning level, and the ADTTS committee is currently making final arrangements for the group, the activities include guided tours around Abingdon and Oxford, cycle trips and festive get-togethers.

From Siegfried Waterschoot in Sint-Niklaas

Good news for the train travellers who want to come to Sint-Niklaas.

Eurostar trains from London will also stop in Antwerp from 14th December onwards. Eurostar trains travelling in the opposite direction, from the continent to London, will not stop in Antwerp.

Eurostar trains can only stop in Antwerp when coming from London, because border and security checks cannot be carried out at Antwerp Central Station. Eurostar says that there are currently no plans to introduce such facilities there.

The trains that already run up to four times a day from London to Amsterdam currently pass through Antwerp without stopping. From 14 December onwards, however, they will stop there. The trains will continue to call at Lille, Brussels-South and Rotterdam as well.

According to Eurostar, the additional stop in Antwerp will not increase the travel time.

Passengers travelling from Antwerp to London will still have to change trains in Brussels-South in order to undergo the necessary border and security checks before boarding the Eurostar.



Antwerp Railway Station (photo Nick Marsh)

The direct connection from London to Antwerp will take 2 hours and 41 minutes, compared with the current journey time of three and a half hours, which includes the transfer in Brussels-South.

Now you can kill two birds with one stone. First you can take your time to admire the train station/cathedral, voted one of the most beautiful train stations in the world. Secondly it will take you only another 17 minutes to travel to your twin town.

Update on the nesting birds

I'm sorry to say, but when I returned home from France, the two love-birds were gone. They denested, moved nest or whatever you want to call it.

But I'm sure that, next year, if they are still alive, they will be back. Starting over the same trials and tribulations to build a nest at the same spot.

Their persistence is beyond my mind. On the one hand, wherever they may be, they always come back, on the other hand their instincts are completely disturbed regarding living a life.

What's On in Abingdon in August

Here are just a few of the forthcoming events culled from Abingdon Town's events website, <https://www.abingdon.gov.uk/events>.

Click on the links for further information on each event.

And if any of you have an event you would like put in here – please let us know via the email link at the end of this Newsletter.

Until 4 th October 10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Abingdon County Hall Museum	<u>Exhibition: Saxon Abingdon</u> Following on from last year's Roman exhibition, we will continue the story of the Abingdon area and its people through the Anglo-Saxon period and give a more detailed context to the significant Anglo-Saxon artefacts in the Museum's permanent display. The exhibition looks at the archaeological evidence and takes a closer look at people's lives here in the early medieval period. Be sure not to miss it! FREE ADMISSION
5 th August 7:30 – 9:30 pm	The King's Head and Bell	<u>Abingdon Speakers' Club</u> Do you want to improve your public speaking ? Join us and learn how to be a better communicator. Toastmasters is a nonprofit organisation that operates clubs worldwide for the purpose of helping people develop communication, public speaking and leadership skills.
8 th August - 27 th September 10:00 am – 4:00 pm	Abingdon County Hall Museum	<u>Exhibition: Cherished Clay by artist Kayleigh O'Donnell</u> Kayleigh O'Donnell is an Abingdon potter and recent Great Pottery Throw Down quarter-finalist. The exhibition 'Cherished Clay' will showcase Kayleigh's creative work whilst on the television series as well as her recent makes. Please join her on the first day of this exhibition, Saturday 8th August, for a Children's art workshop in the Museum Basement. Free drop-in session.

Twin Towns Calendar for 2026

Here we wish to list festivals and events in our twin towns that may be of interest to potential visitors during 2026. Do now please tell us about all the major events for each twin town this year! Use the email link at the end of this Newsletter.

Ongoing	Argentan	https://en.normandie-tourisme.fr/hidden-gems/argentan/events-in-argentan/
January 2026 onwards	Colmar	https://www.tourisme-colmar.com/en/whats-on
Ongoing	Lucca	Calendar of Events
Ongoing	Schongau	https://allevents.in/schongau/all
January 2026 onwards	Sint-Niklaas	https://www.ontdeksintniklaas.be/en/see-and-do
January 2026 onwards	Thames, Coromandel Peninsula	https://thecoromandel.nz/events/events-calendar/

ADTTS Contacts

Chairman
Stella Carter
The Old Bakehouse
2 Winterbourne Rd
Abingdon OX14 1AJ
01235 520317
chairman@adtts.eu

Membership
Rosemary Jardine
80 Baker Road
Abingdon OX14 5LJ
01235 539291
membership@adtts.eu

Secretary

secretary@adtts.eu

Non-members of the Society are also welcome to receive copies of this monthly newsletter. Just email your request to newsletter@adtts.eu. Back copies are also available on request.

The deadline for copy for the next newsletter is two days before the end of the month. Please send contributions to newsletter@adtts.eu. The Society's website is <https://www.abingdonandvaletwinning.org.uk/>. This address may be abbreviated to <http://adtts.eu>.

The programme may be found on the website at <https://www.abingdonandvaletwinning.org.uk/future.htm>. The website also has reports, with pictures, of all twinning events going back to 2007.

Membership

To join the Society, apply to the Membership Secretary, Rosemary Jardine. See the [membership page](#) on the ADTTS website for forms and contact details.



Seeking the shade (photo: Brian Read)