

Newsletter

June 2019

Guest Editor: Brian Read

Forthcoming Events

Thursday 20 th June	Evening Drinks Party
27 th June – 1 st July	Canoe Camping
13 th – 20 th July	Schongau Language Course
5 th – 9 th September	Sint-Niklaas Twinning Weekend
23 rd – 24 th November	Trip to Sint-Niklaas
Thursday 19 th September	Evening Meeting: AGM

*Evening meetings are held at Preston Road Community Centre – 7.30 for **7.45 pm***

Evening Drinks Party

Thursday 20 June 2019

- 7.00 for 7.30pm at Longside, Tatham Road, Abingdon, OX14 1QD

Our final meeting of the season will, as last year, take the form of an evening Garden Drinks Party. This will be held in the garden of our vice-president, Michael Matthews, at Longside, Tatham Road. The cost will be the normal £5 per head for a jolly evening of Fizz and Nibbles, with hopefully as good weather as we had last year. If you would like to bring your own chair, please do so. ***See you there!***

Canoe Camping in Oxfordshire 2019

Thursday 27th June – Monday 1st July 2019

Following last year's successful event, ADTTS has invited its twinning friends to come for a weekend of canoe camping on the River Thames. Details were in the December Newsletter. Contact Richard Smart (dickcsmart@hotmail.co.uk or 01235 523324) if you would like to join the participants for an evening meal.

Schongau Language Course

13th – 20th July 2019

Participants from Schongau's twin towns have been invited on their popular German language course. Six members will be going from Abingdon.

Sint-Niklaas Twinning Weekend

Thursday 5th September – Monday 9th September 2019

De Verzustering, the twinning committee of Sint-Niklaas, is holding its annual twinning weekend from Thursday the fifth of September to Monday the ninth of September. [This is the balloons weekend!]

As usual they are inviting 4 people of each twin town.

The theme this year is the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Sint-Niklaas.

The outline programme is:

- Thursday the 5th: arrival of the guests
- Friday the 6th: visit of the Atlantic wall at the coast
- Saturday the 7th: official welcome by the mayor. We join the official programme of the town celebration.
- Sunday the 8th: thematic walk in the city. "Games without borders". Farewell dinner
- Monday the 9th: leaving of the guests

Sint-Niklaas wish to know names by **9th June**. So, if you are interested in going, or need more information, please contact **John Smith**, secretary@adttts.eu, asap.

Weekend Trip to Sint-Niklaas

Saturday 23rd November – Sunday 24th November 2019

ADTTS is organising a 2-day weekend coach trip to Sint-Niklaas on Saturday 23rd - Sunday 24th November. The highlights of the trip include a visit to a chocolatier, and the House of St Nicolas (Huis van De Sint) in Sint-Niklaas, as well the famous Christmas Market in Bruges.

Each year, during the lead-up to St Nicolas Day, 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 Nicolas. It is a huge attraction for children in Belgium, who come from all over the country to visit it, and the St Nicolas in residence.

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

The trip will be offered to Abingdon twinningers, and in the first instance we would like to give priority to pupils of St Nicolas School and their parents (although there is a limit on the number of places available).

For further details and the itinerary, please see the May Newsletter. 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 (nick.marsh@comstar.fi), tel 07745 440047.

Recent Events

Europe Day Meal

Thursday 9th May 2019

The annual evening meal together to mark Europe Day was in a new venue this year. We were one of the very first groups to dine in the recently refurbished Council Chamber in the Guildhall, Abingdon. A special menu was designed by the resident chef to reflect our links with the four countries of our Twin Towns.



Forty-eight guests met in the old Council Chamber on 9th May 2019 for our annual dinner, with dishes chosen to celebrate culinary diversity. I was somewhat surprised to find my first course was a 'hot dog' but this was the opener to a delicious dinner with good wine and good company. All the while our elders (by several hundred years) and betters (probably not!) gazed down upon us from their portraits on the surrounding walls. They probably wished that their fare had been as good as ours. The staff were particularly friendly and helpful and overcame the difficulty of having the kitchen some distance away. The round tables made cross table conversation more difficult than at a long table but I felt contributed to a greater togetherness.

It was a pleasant and enjoyable evening and showed that 'breaking bread' together helps to overcoming some of the divisions as to whether we should be 'in' or 'out'.

Neil Hancox

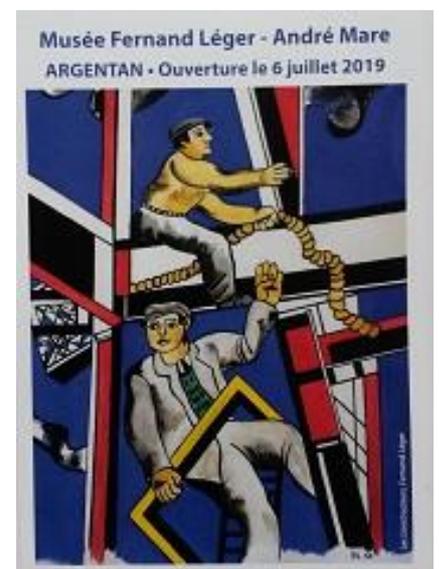
Evening Meeting - Léger

Thursday 23rd May 2019 - at Preston Road Community Centre

For our last evening meeting before the summer break, we learnt about Fernand Léger in a fascinating talk presented by enthusiast **Anne Dodd**.

Fernand Léger (1881 - 1955) - painter, sculptor and filmmaker - is the most famous person to have been born in Argentan, Abingdon's twin town in Normandy. He was considered the equal of Pablo Picasso by many. This July a museum in the centre of Argentan is to be opened in the house that he was born in. A recent exhibition at Tate Liverpool of 50 of his works was a must-see event in the Art World. He reflected the changing social and artistic world of his time and has become increasingly popular of late. One of his paintings was recently sold for almost £55 million.

In showing many examples, Anne covered the great variety of Léger's work as it evolved throughout his life. The talk was followed by appropriate Normandy refreshments of camembert and cider.



Twinning Weekend in Colmar 16th – 20th May 2019

We weren't expecting to be dowsing for water and "lines of energy", or being surprised by an oompah band in a ceramic museum at night when we participated in the "Weekend de Jumelage" in Colmar, but these things did happen! We knew we would enjoy great hospitality, splendid food and wine and above all, renewing old friendships and making new friends with colleagues from our twin towns. Colmar hosted 14 of us to stay in their own homes or eat at their tables, from Sint-Niklaas, Schongau, Princeton and Abingdon. If you are not familiar with Colmar it is a beautiful Alsatian town in a winegrowing area at the foot of the Jura mountains. We naturally toured the town and enjoyed a reception at the Marie (the town hall). We also enjoyed wine tasting, were shown around the quaint wine village of Eguisheim, and visited a monastery high in the Jura founded by Saint Odile, who born blind, miraculously recovered her sight. Overlooking the attractive town of Obernai we saw a memorial to the 'Malgré Nous'- Frenchmen from Alsace/Moselle who were compulsorily recruited into the German army during the second world war, many of



whom died on the Russian front. It was quite moving to be there with real friends from France, Germany, Belgium and the US, a true reflection of the importance for peace and friendship between nations and the role twinning can play in this. The weekend ended with a sumptuous meal at Chalet du Club Vogues, prepared by our hosts and supervised no doubt by Francis, a professional chef. You couldn't get better than that!

Visits to twin towns are always very enjoyable but there is an added dimension if you are able to join in a visit with friends from other twin towns. We are especially grateful for the generosity and welcome given to us by our friends from Colmar.

Rosemary and Ian Jardine

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