

Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society



Newsletter

July - August 2023

Guest Editor: Nick Marsh

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From the Editor

Summer has arrived! As I write this it's 9 o'clock in the morning, the sky is blue with not a cloud in sight and the temperature is already 25°C with the promise of more warm weather to come!

Yesterday, walking around the centre of Oxford I was delighted to see again the large groups of tourists, young and old, being shepherded round the sights by able tour guides (our twinning society boasts a number of such guides) or simple wandering around on their own, mobile phone in hand, following one of the many self-guided tours available.

Admittedly, the numbers were nowhere near as great as in the pre-Covid days, but significantly more than during the dark days of the pandemic.

Summer is a time when tourism and twinning really come into their own. There have already been visits to Colmar, Lucca, Argentan, Schongau and Sint-Niklaas made by twinning members from our society and from Church Twinning.

We also have upcoming visits to Argentan for Bastille Day and to Sint-Niklaas for 4 days at the end of August, and visitors from France coming to Abingdon for canoeing & kayaking.

We are also expecting many visitors from our twin towns to visit us, both on official twinning visits as well as privately.

One fantastic twinning initiative is that of Abingdon School. They are taking a coachload of musicians, the Abingdon School Orchestra, on a musical tour of some of our twin towns in early July. Please read the article on this in the Newsletter.

At the Mayor's Conference in Sint-Niklaas the year before last, one of the suggestions for the



future of twinning was that the local twinning societies should be more proactive in liaising with local groups, clubs and societies – sporting, cultural and special interest – and get them interested in making visits to, or hosting visitors from our twin towns, and our own twinning society would act as a facilitator, making contacts with the corresponding groups in our twin towns.

Photo: Brian Read

I know that many of our members also belong to a host of other clubs and societies in and around Abingdon, so over to you, why not try to get your colleagues and friends in these other groups interested in twinning, and we will facilitate such visits with our own contacts in the twin towns!

Have a wonderful summer and we look forward to seeing you again in the autumn!

Nick Marsh

Editor

Forthcoming Events

11 th – 17 th July 2023	Visit to Argentan for Bastille Day Celebrations
24 th – 30 th July 2023	Canoe/Bike Camping along the Thames
31 st August – 4 th September	Twinning weekend in Sint-Niklaas
Thursday 21 st September	Annual General Meeting at Preston Road CC

24 – 30 July 2023: Canoe/Bike Camping

As in previous years, we shall be hosting visitors from Argentan for canoe and bike camping locally along the Thames. The dates are 24th to 30th July, camping two nights in Oxford and two nights in Abingdon for a mix of French and English participants.

The programme is:

24th July: arrive

25th: paddle and pedal to Oxford campsite via Sandford, set up camp

26th: explore Oxford by bike and canoe

27th: paddle and pedal back to Abingdon lock and set up camp

28th: explore Abingdon by bike and canoe

29th: pack away

30th: return home

HELP!

The organiser, Richard Smart, writes:

On 25th July I have 10 French teenagers and 3 adults coming over to go cycle/canoe camping. They really want to meet English speakers as well as have fun camping, canoeing and cycling so I am looking for people who might like to join us either going upstream to Oxford, exploring Oxford, coming downstream to Abingdon, exploring Abingdon or even just having a meal together. They are very pleasant and polite teenagers and good company so if you think you might like to join us in any way then please contact me, **Richard Smart** on 01235 523324 or dickcsmart@gmail.com.

21 September 2023: Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will take place at Preston Road Community Centre on Thursday 21st September.

All members are welcome to this event and to meet up with each other after the summer break.

Refreshments and snacks will, as usual, be provided.

Recent Events: **Evening Garden Party**

Friday 23 June 2023 - at Longside, Tatham Road, Abingdon OX14 1QD



Again, this year, it was a warm, sunny evening for the annual Midsummer Garden Party in Michael Matthews' lovely garden, where thirty-five members and friends enjoyed a convivial gathering. The garden was looking particularly verdant this year owing to the copious amount of rain we have had, together with the high temperatures!

The fruit mocktails and the prosecco flowed freely. Meanwhile, thanks to the skills of Nikki, Rosemary, Stella and Susan, innovative and tasty canapés circulated amongst us. This was the last monthly evening event for the Society until we resume in September with the AGM.

Huge thanks once again to Michael for hosting our twinning society at this annual event!

Abingdon School Twin Towns Music Tour

Abingdon School is one of the oldest schools in England. The earliest references to the school can be seen in a legal document of 1100, and in the will of the Abbot of Abingdon, John de Blosneville, who in 1256 left money for the support of 13 poor scholars.

Since those days Abingdon school has grown into a flourishing institution with a fine theatre, the Amey Theatre, which many of you will remember from our Twin Towns Music Concert last December, as well as a fine modern science centre and sports hall with swimming pool.

This year, the music department is undertaking a "Twin Towns Music Tour" from 4th to 13th July. The Abingdon School Orchestra of around 60 boys will be travelling with their teachers by coach on a tour encompassing Argentan, Colmar, Sint-Niklaas and Paris. They will be giving concerts in Sint-Niklaas, Argentan and Paris, and attending a concert in Colmar.

Our twin town of Sint-Niklaas has put a lot of effort into publicising the concert in the Don Bosco church in Sint-Niklaas and below is a selection of the publicity from the Sint-Niklaas events magazine and city web pages.



Mention in the Sint-Niklaas events magazine



Magazine cover

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Twin Towns Concert Tour by Abingdon School Orchestra

Info

Waar: **Don Boscokerk**

[Toon op kaart](#)

Wanneer: **10 juli 2023**
20:00-22:00

Prijs: **Basistarief € 0,00**

Organisator: **VZW De Verzustering**

Abingdon Symfonisch School Orkest geeft een éénmalig en gratis concert in de Don Bosco Kerk.

Dit is een unieke belevenis om 70 tal van deze getalenteerde mensen te zien optreden aan deze kant van het Kanalel.

Hierbij het geplande programma :

Max Bruch - Violin Concerto, slow movement
 Jerome Morass - The Big Country, Opening titles from the film
 Camille Saint-Saëns - Organ Symphony, finale
 Franz Schubert - Symphony No 8, The Unfinished, 1st movement
 Ralph Vaughan Williams - English Folksong Suite
 Edward Elgar - Nimrod from the Enigma Variations

De volgende dag geven ze hun laatste optreden in Parijs als afsluiting van hun tournee.

Optredens van de Abingdonschool uit onze zusterstad Abingdon

Info

Waar: **CC Sint-Niklaas**

[Toon op kaart](#)

Wanneer: **10 juli 2023**
11:30-21:00

Prijs: **Basistarief € 0,00**

De Abingdonschool is een onafhankelijke school, oorspronkelijk opgericht in de 12e eeuw door de plaatselijke Benedictijner abdij St Mary. Na de afschaffing van de abdijen in 1538 werd de school omgevormd tot een grammarschool.

Rond de middag is er het optreden van de Big Band op de markt aan het stadhuis naast de Sint. Zij brengen werk van oa. Stevie Wonder, Tito Puente, Herbie Hancock en Count Basie.

20.00uur Don Boscokerk.

Hier vergast het First Orchestra ons op uittreksels uit werken van Engelse en Franse componisten.

Publicity from the Sint-Niklaas website

CONCERT
Abingdon School Symphony Orchestra
 Chef d'Orchestre: **Michael Stinton**
 Angleterre



Entrée libre

BRUCH - SAINT-SAËNS - SCHUBERT
 VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Jeudi 6 juillet 2023
20h30
 Église Saint-Martin d'Argentan
 35 Rue Saint-Martin, 61200 Argentan

Also, the **Cercle Jumelage Europe Argentan** announces on Facebook:

"The Europe Argentan Twinning Circle has the pleasure to inform you that on Thursday, July 6, 2023 at 20:30 an English orchestra will perform in the Saint-Martin d'Argentan Church.

As part of our twinning with Abingdon, England, an orchestra of 65 English young people (aged 16-18) of semi-professional level will perform in Argentan with Bruch, Saint-Saëns and Schubert!

The entrance is free.

We're expecting you all! Please feel free to share this information."

We at ADTTS are delighted to have been able to put Abingdon School in touch with our European twinning counterparts, and wish Abingdon School every success with their tour!

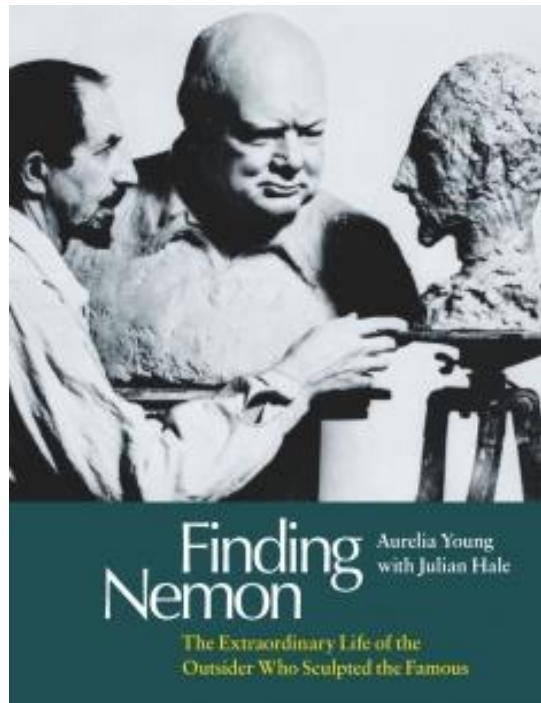
Famous Abingdon and District Residents – Part 1, Oscar Nemon

Although not a twinning event, on 22nd February Abingdon residents were very fortunate to hear a fascinating talk under the auspices of the Arts Society Abingdon by Lady Aurelia Young, the elder daughter of the celebrated sculptor Oscar Nemon, who lived and had his studio at Boars Hill from the time of the Second World War.

Boars Hill is located between Abingdon and Oxford, and has excellent views over the City of Oxford. It is also known as being the home of many famous residents, including the poets John Masefield and Robert Graves, scientist and Nobel Prize Winner Dorothy Hodgkin, and Nobel Laureate Sir Roger Penrose (mathematician of aperiodic tiling fame).

Oscar Nemon was born in 1906 in Osijek, Yugoslavia and became one of the greatest 20th century sculptors. After passing his school matriculation, Nemon moved to Vienna at the age of 18. In the wake of the first World War, Vienna was experiencing a rising wave of anti-Semitism. Nemon was unable to get access to formal tuition so he apprenticed himself to local sculptor Anton Hanak and subsequently set up his own studio focusing on Expressionism. He also did portraits.

Nemon's uncle owned a bronze factory in Vienna, meaning he could cast his work. An admirer of Sigmund Freud, they were introduced in 1931 by Paul Federn, and Nemon made a sculpture of Freud for his seventy-fifth birthday. The original wood carving for Nemon's bust



of Freud is now displayed in the Freud Museum in London, and there is a large seated bronze outside the Tavistock Clinic.

Nemon moved to Brussels in 1925 to study sculpture at the Académie des Beaux Arts where he flourished. He continued to develop his sculpting and also started to become known for his unique style of portraiture.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Nemon explored Constructivism and Cubism, a fine example of this is his relief of the aviator Charles Lindberg in 1927.

His fame spread and subsequent sitters included Albert I and Queen Astrid of Belgium. Throughout his time in Belgium Nemon also designed bronze reliefs and medals.

Facing an increasingly anti-Semitic mood in Brussels, Nemon moved to England in 1936. In London he met Patricia Villiers Stuart, and they settled on Boars Hill in 1941 when their first child Falcon was born. Falcon was followed by two daughters, Aurelia and Electra.

The house on Boars Hill was called 'Pleasant Land' as Patricia was a great fan of William Blake and his poem 'Jerusalem'. Nemon and Patricia were able to rebuild Pleasant Land in the early 1970s and it now holds the Oscar Nemon Museum and Archive.

During his lifetime Oscar Nemon achieved great fame and sculpted many of the crowned heads and leading politicians of Europe as well as many celebrities.

He is also famous as the sculptor of the large Winston Churchill statue in the House of Commons.

His daughter Aurelia has recently written a book 'Finding Nemon' about her father's life. This book is available from the Oscar Nemon website at www.oscarnemon.org.uk.

The studio is also open to the public on certain days, and information on the opening times can also be found on the website.



From Siegfried Waterschoot in Sint-Niklaas

Tweezers and mittens

Certainly, you have got them in your fridge. Packs of pre-packaged meat, cheese, fish or something else. In most cases, there is a text in one of the corners that says: "Open here" accompanied by a recycling arrow and even an illustrated instruction on how to proceed.

Alas, sometimes things don't work the way they should. The little tab resists.

I had taken out one of those pre-packed food packages and I was plucking away at the two clingy little triangular pieces of plastic. I tried to separate the top one from the bottom one in order to get the container opened. Not a chance. I'm almost certain that those two little buggers were singing that famous song of Roxy Music: "Let's stick together, come on, come on.....".



Of course, on top of that, I had clipped my fingernails the other day, so I might as well be wearing woollen mittens. Opening the package was definitely in vain.

Now, I hear you thinking: "Alright, stop the fussing, just take a knife and cut...."

Stop, stop, stop!! Hold your horses. When your front door lock refuses to do its duty properly, you don't immediately reach for a pneumatic jackhammer to drill out your front door, do you? Before you take such a drastic measure, you need to thoroughly consider all the options, don't you?

The same goes for the ongoing battle with the opening tabs of food containers.

I tried to wriggle a sharp knife between the clingy little tabs. It worked. I managed to create a little gap. Jubilation! I immediately reached for the upper tab to open the package.

Damn! The moment I released the package to catch the upper tab, the flipping thing shifted and the tabs sealed up again. I had to find a way to pin the package down. Done. Again, I wriggled the knife between the tabs and grabbed the upper tab. At least I tried....

No matter how good the plan may be, there's always a hitch. The moment my clipped fingernails came into play, it all went south. However hard I tried, I couldn't get a good enough grip on the upper tab, because it was too small to catch between my freshly groomed nails.

Blinking Henry! I had to think on my feet. My brain was doing overtime. The compulsion to put the knife in the package with a kind of hara-kiri move was growing on me. I yearned for the food. My stomach was growling. Think, Siegfried, think!

Tweezers? Tweezers! That's it! I had a nice specimen sitting in the kitchen drawer. One of those to pull bones out of a fish fillet.

No sooner said than done, at last I got a grip! It gave in. Slowly, but steadily I pulled the top covering from the food container. A waft of lovely smelling food tickled my nostrils. Finally, the reward for an excellent job was coming up.

If the microwave would now do its job, at least.

ADTTS Contacts

Chairman

Stella Carter

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

Treasurer & Membership

Ian & Rosemary Jardine

80 Baker Road
Abingdon OX14 5LJ
01235 539291
treasurer@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.

The deadline for copy for the next newsletter is two days before the end of the month. Please send contributions to newsletter@adtts.eu. (No publication in August)

Keep right up to date by going to www.adtts.eu.