

Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society



Newsletter

January 2024

Guest Editor: Brian Read

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GELUKKIG NIEUWJAAR 2024

BONNE ANNÉE 2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024

FELICE ANNO NUOVO 2024

FROHES NEUES JAHR 2024

Chairman's New Year Message

Hello Friends,

The world seems to have shrunk to an all-time low in December as each day we have been bombarded with atrocities happening around the world. News of mass shootings, the ongoing war in Ukraine, the Israel-Gaza war, and then yesterday news of a 'good Samaritan' being killed as he helped an unconscious woman lying in the road, here in England. Coming home from our own Christmas celebrations on the 28th Howard and I followed a car with a Ukraine number plate. We wouldn't have seen a Ukrainian car on our roads two years ago. Now, whilst the occupants were probably sharing our enjoyment of the Christmas lights around us, unlike us they were almost certainly displaced, fearful for loved ones back home, fighting for peace and for freedom.

Thank goodness for twinning! Established to create understanding and friendship between nations it is a star of light in all our lives, I am sure you will agree. We had a very happy Christmas gathering at the Hilton hotel for 40 of us on the 17th. Then on the 21st, 20 of us greatly enjoyed storytelling, some fact, some fiction, at our monthly meeting. Each time I go into my dining room I see Marcel and Irene's Father Christmas card smiling down at me from the piano. It is joyful! On the mantelpiece sits Maria's handmade card, sent from Lucca. Thank you, Maria. I treasure your cards and will keep them for ever. And the envelopes! Thank you everyone for all your Christmas messages and cards. Each one has made me feel grateful and glad of your friendship.

So, we look towards 2024. We must look forward with optimism knowing that each one of us can help make the world a happier, safer, place. We will welcome new friends (hello Thames!) into twinning and enjoy the opportunities it brings us.

Happy New Year everyone.

Stella Carter

PS, the postman has just arrived with New Year greetings from Marie-Louise and Siegfried and Marina. What a great start to 2024! Thank you!

The greetings card above is from Felix, Siegfried, Chantal, Beate and Marc in Sint-Niklaas.

Forthcoming Events (January - March 2024)

Thursday 18 th January	Evening Meeting: Quiz - PRCC
Thursday 15 th February	Evening Meeting: D-Day - PRCC
Saturday 17 th February	Coach Trip to Portsmouth
16 th – 17 th March	La Fête de la Normandie - Argentan
Thursday 21 st March	Evening Meeting: "Morris Minors in the Media" - PRCC

Evening Meeting – Quiz

Thursday 18 January 2024 - 7.30 for 8 pm at Preston Road Community Centre

We start the programme in the New Year with the popular ADTTS Quiz night. After two years of playing the competition on Zoom, last year we re-established the fun of meeting in person. So, let's meet up again! Loosely based on the typical pub quiz, ours is a little idiosyncratic with both mental and physical challenges. Expect questions on Abingdon and some with a twinning or European theme. Maybe there'll be the plasticine challenge or a food and drink round? Come along on the third Thursday in January at 7.30 pm to Preston Road Community Centre. Entrance is £5, including refreshments. There may be prizes?

Evening Meeting – D-Day in Normandy

Thursday 15 February 2024 - 7.30 for 8 pm at Preston Road Community Centre

In preparation for the D-Day commemorations in June for the 80th anniversary of D-Day, Mark Lane will come from Argentan to give a talk about D-Day, including about the enduring effect of the invasion on the inhabitants of Normandy.

Coach Trip to Portsmouth

Saturday 17 February 2024

A day out from Abingdon by coach will take us to Portsmouth to visit the D-Day Museum there. It is also an opportunity to visit the dockyards, Spinnaker Tower, etc.

Evening Meeting - "Morris Minors in the Media"

Thursday 21 March 2024 - 7.30 for 8 pm at Preston Road Community Centre

Morris Minors are of particular local interest as the cars were assembled at the MG factory in Abingdon. Ann Ford, an owner of a Morris Minor and enthusiast, will come to give a talk on how the cars have played a part in TV and film productions.

Invitation to La Fête de la Normandie

16 - 17 March 2024 - Argentan

The mayor and councillors of our twin town of Argentan invite two people from each of its twinned towns to come for the weekend of 16th and 17th of March for the annual Fête de la Normandie. Accommodation will be provided for the nights of 15th and 16th March. ADTTS should notify participation by 1st February. The programme for the weekend will follow later.

Forthcoming Events (January - September 2024)

For details of all the events arranged so far for the rest of the year, look online at the ADTTS website. The full programme may be found at <http://www.abingdonandvaletwinning.org.uk/future.htm>.

The website also has reports, with pictures, of all twinning events going back to 2007. Note, that to save typing the full domain name, the address of the website may be shortened to www.adtts.eu. (Indeed, even the ubiquitous 'www.' may be omitted.)



Abingdon Wharf in December 2023 with seventy-five Christmas puddings

Past Event - Evening Meeting - "Would I lie to you?"

Thursday 21 December 2023 - at Preston Road Community Centre



Is ADTTS WILTY a code specially designed by GCHQ to tease our brains over Christmas or is the Twin Town Society wilting?

No. Our meeting on the evening of 21st December, attended by fifteen or so hardy souls who had written all their Christmas cards, wrapped all their presents and run out of wine, was, thank you Rob Bryden by way of Richard Smart, our take on 'Would I Lie to You?'

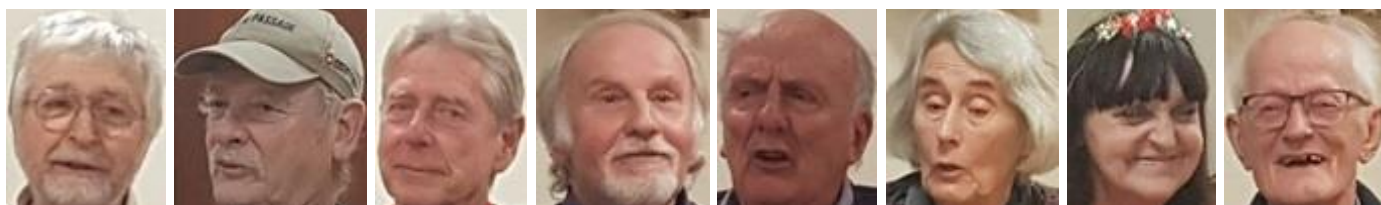
Howard kicked off with a story about falling asleep in the mayor of Colmar's lap after a long journey and a heavy night, followed by more alcoholic excesses related by Nick, who claimed that he didn't know that Belgian beer was rather stronger than your average pint and Richard who showed us the dangers of subtle differences in French pronunciation. It was to do with oue and eh, or something like that as a first syllable, which can make the difference between bottom and good. Another story illustrated the dangers of a little language used at the wrong time (innocently) which implied you were asking a patrician Spanish lady to go to bed. More stories followed, from Stella, about a chance meeting in an exclusive hotel bar, an invitation Phil received to go backstage and meet the Hollies before they were famous, and Margaret's account of a Korean child falling into a fountain. There were more but their themes escape me at the moment.

After a very brief outline of the story members of the audience questioned the storyteller and then voted as to whether he or she was telling the truth. I thought most speakers were being truthful but was sadly disillusioned in my fellow man/woman when they owned up and said it was, usually, a pack of lies.

At last, our gullibility exhausted, Nikki and Susan produced sausage rolls, stollen, mince pies, satsumas (in leaf) and mulled wine.

It was a most enjoyable evening. Whether my account is true or not, I will leave you to decide.

Neil Hancox, 22 December 2023.



The story tellers – did they lie, or not?

Past Event - Christmas Lunch

Sunday 17 December 2023 - at Hilton Garden Inn, Marcham Road, OX14 1TZ

Each year we look forward to meeting together for the Christmas lunch. Following last year's successful occasion, we again chose to hold the meal at the Hilton Garden Inn, this year on Sunday 17th December. We were greeted with a non-alcoholic welcome drink, followed by a three-course festive meal in a private room. As an innovation this year, the gathering concluded with a free raffle for everyone, which offered prizes connected with our twin towns. We are grateful to Peter Dodd for organising it all.



Right: Outside the Abingdon Town Council offices

ADTTS Contacts

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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)



Abingdon Market Place at Christmas