

Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society



Newsletter

June 2025

Guest Editor: Brian Read

In this issue:

- From the Editor
- Forthcoming Events (June 2025 – September 2025)
- Europe Day Meal
- VE80: The Eightieth Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day
- Evening Meeting - The History and Etiquette of Afternoon Tea
- The Mayor's Award to Anne Smart
- Invitation to a Twinning Weekend in Sint-Niklaas
- What's On in Abingdon in June
- Twin Towns Calendar for 2025
- From Siegfried Waterschoot in Sint-Niklaas: *Such a catch*
- Contact details

(All unattributed articles and photos should be credited to the editor.)

From the Editor

In May, our winter programme of evening meetings concluded with a very informative talk on that traditional English custom, the afternoon tea party. We learnt of its history and etiquette before putting it into practice.

Earlier in the month was Europe Day when we look forward to celebrate with a meal together. We are able to report that this year we again enjoyed the fine service and surroundings of The Cosener's House.

Also in this issue, we hear about the award to Anne Smart, we have musings from Siegfried Waterschoot on double binds in life, and included is the regular listing of local events from Nick Marsh.

We now look forward to two last big events of the season: the midsummer garden party and a treasure hunt. The former is always a congenial social occasion. The treasure hunt was a much-enjoyed innovation last year – what challenge will be devised for us this time?

There's still just time to arrange a visit to Argentan for the Bastille Day celebrations (see last month's newsletter) or to claim a place on the Sint-Niklaas twinning weekend in September.

For many of us, thoughts are now turning to summer holidays, quite possibly in Europe. Might there be an opportunity to fit in a visit to one of our twin towns? We are spoilt for choice! Perhaps return with a report or article for the newsletter?

Forthcoming Events (June 2025 – September 2025)

Thursday 26 th June	Garden Party
Thursday 17 th July	Treasure Hunt
Thursday 18 th September	AGM at PRCC

Annual Garden Party

Thursday 26 June 2025 - 7.00 pm at St Ethelwold's House

Members are invited to the Summer Garden Party at St Ethelwold's House. This is situated in the town centre at 30 East St Helen Street. We look forward to enjoying the lovely garden, getting together with sparkling wine, soft drinks and canapés.

Treasure Hunt

Thursday 17 July 2025

We plan a treasure hunt for small teams travelling in cars around south Oxfordshire and meeting up afterwards for supper.

Europe Day Meal

Friday 9 May 2025 at The Cosener's House



One of the highlights of the twinning year is the annual meal together to mark Europe Day. It is an opportunity to express our support for Europe with shared values and to identify with European friends. This year, we were delighted that members and friends would again be able to celebrate at The Cosener's House. Appropriately, the chef had devised for us a meal to highlight some European specialities. There were four or five attractive alternatives to choose from for each course. They included, for example, Travers de Porc au miel, Sauerbraten, Mushroom Bourguignon, Classic Crème Brûlée and German Cheesecake (Käsekuchen). Our thanks go to Nikki Henton and Peter Dodd for the organisation of this popular event.

VE80: The Eightieth Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day

Thursday 8 May 2025 at the War Memorial



This year marks the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ days. The national commemoration of Victory in Europe Day was reflected in a programme of events in Abingdon that extended into the weekend. The British Legion took the organisational lead.

First, at noon on the day of the anniversary, there was a ceremony at the town's War Memorial, at which wreaths and blue flowers of peace were laid. ADTTS was represented by our chairman, Stella Carter.

See last month's newsletter for the full list of VE80 activities in the town. Particularly impressive was the forty-foot railway model of a dockside preparing ships, etc. for the invasion of Normandy. On the Sunday afternoon ADTTS was invited to have a stand in the precinct to publicise twinning and European friendship.

Evening Meeting - **The History and Etiquette of Afternoon Tea**

Thursday 15 May 2025 at Preston Road Community Centre



For our evening meeting in May at Preston Road Community Centre, we heard from guest speaker **Shaun Todd** about the origins and traditions of the traditional English Tea Party. This is a subject that Shaun has become an expert on. He shares his knowledge and enthusiasm by giving talks to raise money for [Dogs for Good](#). This is a UK-based charity that trains dogs to help adults and children with physical disabilities and learning disabilities, children with autism and adults with dementia.

Indeed, Shaun's talk was fascinating. He told of the origin of afternoon tea as an opportunity for ladies to entertain together – in tea dresses, without corsets! We learnt how to use a napkin (never a serviette) and how to fold it on one's lap. He detailed the correct order in which to add cucumber sandwiches, scones and cakes to a cake stand. Is it jam or cream first on a scone? (Let alone, how to pronounce it.) Shaun displayed some relevant objects, such as sugar tongs, tea cosy and cake forks. (Left-handed forks do exist.) The muffin warmer was actually recognised by one of our members, being the proud owner of one. Then there was the moustache guard cup or attachment to protect waxed whiskers from hot tea or coffee.

Fittingly, the evening concluded with everyone sitting down to enjoy delicious sandwiches, scones and cakes (notably Susan's parsnip cake).

The Mayor's Award to Anne Smart

Monday 12 May 2025 in St Helen's Church



At the annual Mayor-Making ceremony, it is customary for the outgoing mayor to recognise citizens for exceptional service to the town of Abingdon-on-Thames. This year the Mayor, Cllr Gaby Barody, made a posthumous award to Anne Smart. It was received by her widower, Richard. Anne promoted sustainable living in the community with inspirational leadership. This commendation was well deserved. For ADTTS, members will remember, for example, the presentation by Anne and Richard at our February 2023 meeting when they gave us an insight into their experiences with relief fostering.

Anne's award citation: *In recognition of her outstanding service to Carbon Cutters, her contribution to the green agenda and generally to the community of Abingdon. Her Legacy continues through the work she inspired and the lives she touched.*

Invitation to a Twinning Weekend in Sint-Niklaas

Thursday 4 to Monday 8 September 2025

This is a reminder of the announcement in last month's newsletter. Our twinning friends in Sint-Niklaas are organising a weekend of activities for visitors. They invite four people from each of their twin towns to participate.

This has become an annual event around the town's Peace and Balloon Festivals. Their theme this year is: **HIDDEN PEARLS, RIGHT AND LEFT**. Highlights of the programme:

- A visit to the town of Antwerp

- A visit to the fortress Liefkenshoek and to the abandoned village of Doel

- See the balloon festival on the Grote Markt

- A guided walk around Sint-Niklaas

- The famous *Games Without Borders*, followed by the farewell barbecue.

As previous visitors from Abingdon will tell you, this is a great opportunity for an enjoyable weekend in mixed company. If you might be interested and wish to know more, do contact Nick Marsh (07745 440047, nickqgmarsh@gmail.com), who is the ADTTS liaison with Sint-Niklaas. **Act quickly if you wish to take up a remaining place.**

(There are reports of the 2023 and 2024 corresponding weekends on the ADTTS website and in the October Newsletters.)

What's On in Abingdon in June

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.

Nick Marsh

2 nd June 7:00 pm	Abingdon Guildhall	<u>Environment, Amenities and Infrastructure Committee</u> Monday 2 June 2025, 7 pm Old Magistrates' Court, Guildhall
5 th June 11:00 am – 4:00 pm	Abingdon Guildhall	<u>Carbon Literacy Training</u> Get certified as Carbon Literate with the Vale of White Horse's creative community for World Environment Day! Learn the most impactful ways to tackle climate change through your creative practice or cultural organisation. Carbon Literacy Training equips learners with the knowledge, skills, motivation and confidence to embed positive climate action in your work and personal lives.
5 th June 7:00 pm	Amey Theatre	<u>NT Live: A Streetcar Named Desire</u> Gillian Anderson (Sex Education), Vanessa Kirby (The Crown), and Ben Foster (Lone Survivor) lead the cast in Tennessee Williams' timeless masterpiece, returning to cinemas. From visionary director Benedict Andrews, this acclaimed production was filmed live during a sold-out run at the Young Vic Theatre in 2014. £12 - 14
7 th June 11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Abingdon Library	<u>On Safari in Abingdon</u> Nature writer and walker, Paul Gamble, will be talking about the birds, butterflies and dragonflies of Abingdon including tips for where and when these can be seen 'on our doorstep'. This is an event for the whole family. To book your free ticket please call 01865 815005, email abingdon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk or come to the library.
8 th June 11:00 am – 4:00 pm	116 & 118 Oxford Road, Abingdon	<u>Gardens Open for Charity</u> The gardens of 116 & 118 Oxford Road, Abingdon are open for charity, entry is £6 (accompanied children free). Our team of helpers will be serving teas and there will be plants for sale. All proceeds go to NGS nursing charities. We look forward to welcoming back many of you. There have been a few changes this year as always with a garden. We love to share our ideas, and projects with you all. Look forward to seeing you here. £6

12 th June 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Abingdon Library	<p><u>An Evening with Simon Mason</u> Come and join us at Abingdon Library for an evening with CWA Golden Dagger nominee Simon Mason, author of the brilliant 'DI Wilkins' and 'Finder' mysteries, as he talks about his writing and career to date as well as his latest novel, 'A Voice in the Night'.</p> <p>Tickets £2, including a free welcome drink, available from the library counter, by calling 01865 815005, or emailing abingdon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk.</p>
13 th June 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm	Unicorn Theatre	<p><u>Shadow Dancers</u> Oxfordshire company Café Reason Butoh Dance Theatre presents a double bill of original performance. An extract from their powerful new work 'Body Ecologies: Beyond the Human' and a rare chance to see US artist Julie Becton Gillum in 'Dusk', a response to the darkening world. With live music from Malcolm Atkins.</p> <p>Butoh is a radical dance form, originating in post-war Japan and committed to expressing 'the hidden darkness of the body'. £12.50 - £15</p>
14 th June 10:00 am – 4:30 pm	Abingdon Airfield	<p><u>Air and Country Show</u> An all-round family show in its 25th year. Features Classic Vehicles & Classic Vehicles parades down the runway / crowd line, various Stalls, afternoon Air Displays & elements of HM King's Birthday flypast (huge coup!), Parachute Display Team, Ferret Racing, Tank Rides and much more. £7.00 - £25.00</p>
14 th June 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm	Amey Theatre	<p><u>Abingdon and District Musical Society Concert</u> VERDI – REQUIEM Alexander Walker – Conductor Kate Bailey – Leader Jillian Finnamore – Soprano Jessica Ouston – Mezzo-soprano Anthony Flaum – Tenor William Stevens – Bass-baritone £13 - £15</p>
16 th June 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm	Long Furlong Community Centre	<p><u>Drovers' Roads in Oxfordshire – Tim Healey</u> Join us for a talk which tells of the wilderness paths which the drovers took to avoid paying tolls and the hear about the tell-tale signs they left on the landscape, including Abingdon when they drove wild Welsh ponies through the town. Non-members £5</p>
16 th June 7:00 pm	Amey Theatre	<p><u>The Power of One: The Story of Sir Nicholas Winton and the Kindertransport</u> What makes an ordinary person step up and change history? In 1938, a 29-year-old stockbroker gave up his winter holiday to organise the rescue of 669 children from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. That man was Sir Nicholas Winton. Hear from his son, Old Abingdonian Nick Winton, as he shares the remarkable true story of his father's lifesaving efforts — an act of courage that shaped generations.</p>

28 th June 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm	St Michael and All Angels' Church	<u>Cream Tea</u> On Saturday 28 June, 2.30 pm – 4.30 pm, St Michael's Church, Park Road will be hosting the next Cream Tea of their popular summer series. Join us for an afternoon of live music. Tea/coffee with scone/cake £5. Proceeds to church funds. All welcome. £5
28 th June 7:30 pm – 10:30 pm	Christchurch, Northcourt	<u>Abingdon Town Band 60th Anniversary Concert</u> Abingdon Town Band are celebrating their 60th anniversary throughout 2025. We invite you to come and celebrate with us at our Anniversary Concert on the 28th June 2025 at Christ Church, Northcourt Road, Abingdon. If you are interested in joining us, please head to our website to register interest. Free



Twin Towns Calendar for 2025

Here is an incomplete list of a few major festivals and events in our twin towns that may be of interest to potential visitors during 2025. Do please notify any additions using the email link at the end of this Newsletter.

14 th July	Argentan	Bastille Day
5 th – 7 th September	Sint-Niklaas	<u>Peace Festivities and Balloons weekend</u>
14 th September	Lucca	<u>Holy Cross Celebration</u> Luminara Procession

From Siegfried Waterschoot in Sint-Niklaas

Such a catch

A few weeks ago, one of our granddaughters made her Holy Confirmation. Afterwards, of course, gifts were given. One of the gifts was an iPad, which she coveted for a while. She had been saving all her pocket money for this, but still came short.

So, the family added the remaining amount to make her dream come true. The gift wrapping was impatiently ripped open and the object of supreme happiness of the moment was torn out the box. As it had done his job, the thrown aside, neglected box landed on front of me. Curious as ever, I began to inspect the remaining items packed in the box. Immediately my eye caught a pile of papers, sitting in the middle. At first, I thought it was a booklet with a manual, but upon closer inspection it turned out to be a pile of leaflets in a whole bunch of languages. I don't think any written language was missing.

I dug through the pile looking for the Dutch folder. The first sentence said: For the manual go to the following Apple website... A silly thought went through my mind.

Supposing, purely hypothetically, that you don't have or can't use a second device. What should you do then? Alright, first charge the tablet and turn it on. Connect to the internet. And now comes the tricky bit. Because you don't have the manual, you're on your own. You can start fooling around in a trial-and-error way, but you'll have to face the consequences.

Somewhere in the general terms and conditions will be clearly stated that: the moment you open the tablet you are agreeing to the general terms and conditions. Somewhere in those conditions it will be also stated that: you have to follow the instructions in the manual precisely, otherwise, in the case of a breakdown, you will lose your warranty.

There you have it. A real catch 22.

It's like: you drive into an unknown city, following your satnav. You drive into a square. Driving around the square you notice that every street leading off the square has a no-entry sign. On top of this, the street you drove along to get into the square is also a one-way street. The only way to get off the square is to leave your car and walk, but there is a general parking ban in the square.

Whether you like it or not, you are in a pickle. You have to commit a traffic violation. You hope that there's no car coming out of the street you want to enter and no police officer on the corner at the end of the street!

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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)

The Society's website is <https://www.abingdonandvaletwinning.org.uk/>. This address may be abbreviated to <http://adtts.eu>.