

Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society



Newsletter

April 2026

Guest Editor: Nick Marsh

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From the Editor

Welcome to the April edition of our Newsletter!

Easter is just around the corner and the countryside is rapidly losing its drab, winter hues, to be replaced by a riot of colour as the daffodils, tulips and other flowers are blooming and the cherry trees and blackthorn are in full bloom.

During the last month a stalwart group braved the elements to enjoy the Abingdon Twinning Society's version of the popular quiz show "Would I Lie to You"; a report by Richard is in this newsletter.

Also in this Newsletter is the programme of forthcoming events, which include the Europe Day Lunch, the annual Garden Party, a wine tasting and, hopefully, another Treasure Hunt in summer. For our next evening meeting we will be hearing about the Basement Museum in West St. Helen's Street.

This year's Europe Day lunch will be at the Bella Napoli restaurant on Saturday 9th May; details of this and the menu and how to book can be found in the Newsletter.

Siegfried from Sint-Niklaas gives us another delicious recipe, this time for chicken in water (or something along those lines). If you haven't yet tried Siegfried's last recipe, for chicory baked in ham, I can thoroughly recommend it.

A late addition to the Newsletter is an invitation to attend the annual Sint-Niklaas twinning event, held in September. Four people from our twinning society can attend, so get your names in early if you would like to go. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

We wish all our readers a Happy Easter!

Nick Marsh

Forthcoming Events in 2026

Thursday 16 th April	Evening Meeting at PRCC – The Little Basement Museum
Saturday 9 th May	Dinner to Celebrate Europe Day
21 st – 24 th August	Anniversary Visit from Argentan
Sunday 8 th November	Laying of Twinning Wreaths on Remembrance Sunday
Sunday 20 th December	Christmas Lunch

Other events in the programme are not yet scheduled, but they include a Wine Tasting, a Treasure Hunt, a Games Evening and the Garden Party. 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/>.

Evening Meeting: **The Story of the Little Basement Museum**

Thursday 16 April 2026 – 7.30 for 8 pm at Preston Road Community Centre

Opposite Abingdon Museum, below a shop, there is another museum that is fascinating, but little known. Tonight, Mike Russell, the creator of the Little Basement Museum, will tell its story.

How did a local scientist, with an international career (including a personal study of quodons!), come to excavate the basement of an old shop in the centre of Abingdon? He unearthed many artefacts from the town's past. They reflect the history of the site going back to Roman times and earlier, even to the Iron Age. Mike has beautifully displayed these discoveries to create a unique museum.

Come along to Preston Road Community Centre on Thursday 16th April to hear Mike's story. Contemporary refreshments will be served.

Past event: **Would I Lie to You**

Thursday 19th March

Numbers were a bit down on this occasion as the date clashed with a very interesting talk on Abingdon's history, nonetheless we had about 18 people and several of them had stories to tell, some of which were true and some not.

Each volunteer would tell a story, then the audience could ask questions before deciding if the story was true or not.

Stella told us how she thought she was at a celebration but in fact it was a funeral.

Dave Dodds told us how he got away with a driving offence by blinding the authorities with scientific graphs.

Pete Dodd told us how when playing cricket, two players tried to catch the ball and managed to knock themselves out.

Richard told how he got drunk with a headmaster in Schongau.

Finally, we had Mohammed, our mystery guest. Richard claimed to be his English teacher which is why his English is so appalling. Howard claimed that Mohammed was a professional footballer and Stella claimed he was some kind of care worker.

It was a great, fun evening thanks to the people who came and especially to Susan, Nikki and all the catering team.

Richard Smart

Church Twinning

Our friends in Schongau, Germany, have invited us, together with a group from Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, for a Church Twinning weekend from 4th to 8th June 2026.

Accommodation will be with host families.

Contact a church twinning representative for further information.

Invitation to the annual Sint-Niklaas twinning event

We are inviting 4 people to join us this year from: Thursday, September 3 (arrival) to Monday, September 7 (departure). Theme: Cities, their rights, their duties.

Program in a nutshell:

Friday: Visit to Ghent. We leave the well-trodden tourist paths to explore its social history, visiting the famous, recently restored *The Adoration of the Lamb* by the Van Eyck brothers.

Saturday: In the morning, a visit is planned to the newly renovated museum of the cartographer Mercator. In the afternoon, we visit Hulst in the Netherlands. We will be back in time to experience the hot air balloon spectacle.

Sunday: In the morning is our city walk with a focus on Art Deco. In the afternoon, we have our unbeatable "Game Without Borders," followed by the farewell BBQ.

If you would like to participate, please let Stella know before June 1st.

Europe Day Meal

Saturday 9 May 2026 – Bella Napoli Restaurant

Every year on Europe Day, 9th May, we celebrate with a meal together here in Abingdon. This year it is a Saturday and we are doing Italian, with a nod to our twin town of Lucca. We have booked the front room of [Bella Napoli](#) in the town centre for 7pm.



There is seating for a maximum number of 32, and the cost of the meal will be £33. This will include a shared starter of antipasti, main course and dessert of your choice and a tip. Drinks will be extra and can be bought and paid for individually at the restaurant.

The menu is typical Italian. The antipasti will be shared and there will be something for everyone. The main courses include vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options. And pizzas! However! The chef can only promise to make and serve eight pizzas in time for them to be served with the other main courses. So, if you fancy pizza, book early! (A Belgian waffle has crept into the desserts!)

If you would like to join us, and we hope you will, please contact Stella to book your place:

bakehouse@supanet.com

01235 520317

The Old Bakehouse, Winterborne Road, Abingdon on Thames, OX14 1AJ.

Send Stella your **menu choices** (by 25th April):

Main: Pizza / Risotto / Spaghetti / Pollo

Dessert: Panna cotta / Gelato / Waffle / Affogato

Send your **payment** (£33) to the ADTTS bank account:

Account: *Abingdon & District Twin Towns Society*

Sort Code: 60-01-01 **A/c No:** 08616752

with your name as reference. If you would rather pay by cash or cheque, please arrange directly with the Treasurer:

Susan Read

01235 529779

treasurer@adtts.eu

Look forward to seeing you there.

Stella Carter

Europe Day Menu

Starter

Antipasti

(Italian mixed salami, buffalo mozzarella, cherry tomatoes, mixed olives, homemade bread)

Mains

Bella Napoli Pizza

(Parma ham, mushrooms, cherry and sundried tomatoes, black olives, spinach)

or

Vegetariano Risotto (V, VG, GF)

(Mixed Mediterranean vegetables in a rich pomodoro sauce)

or

Spaghetti Frutti Di Mare

(Squid, mussels, tiger prawns in creamy pomodoro sauce)

or

Pollo e Parma (GF)

(Chicken breast, Parma ham, roasted new potatoes, green beans, white wine sauce)

Desserts

Panna cotta

(Vanilla cream dessert finished with raspberry coulis and dark chocolate)

or

3 scoops Italian gelato

(Vanilla, Chocolate, Strawberry)

or

Belgium Waffle

(Topped with banana, vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce)

or

Affogato

(Vanilla ice cream, crunchy biscotti, whipped cream, shot of espresso and cinnamon)

V - Vegetarian, VG - Vegan, GF - Can be made gluten free

From Siegfried Waterschoot in Sint-Niklaas

Another recipe from the Twinning MasterChef!

I heard from Nick that my recipe for baked chicory wrapped in ham was well received, so I'll give you another recipe. As we're going to visit Ghent during our next twinning event, (the official invitation is in this Newsletter), I'll give you the signature dish of Ghent.

Waterzooi met kip. Water = water, zooi = old Flemish name for cooking, kip = chicken. Or chicken cooked in water. But never judge a recipe by its title.

Some history. During the Middle Ages two water mills, on the river Scheldt near the old city walls, used to grind grain into flour for the people of Ghent. Remnants of grain and flour ended up in the river. This attracted all kinds of river fish, which were certainly not averse to an easy bite 24/7. These, in turn, were an abundant catch for the people of Ghent. So, in the beginning, the main ingredient of this poor man's dish was freshwater fish.

Over the centuries, due to industrial pollution, fish was replaced by chicken, a safer and cheaper ingredient than river fish. Nowadays you can replace the chicken with sea fish or, if you want to be really posh, with lobster and prawns.

The recipe, serves four.

Ingredients

4 large chicken legs
3 leeks (white part only)
5 stalks of green celery
3 carrots
Half a lemon
6 stalks of flat-leaf parsley
500 grams peeled baby potatoes
1 onion
1 dl light cream
1 egg yolk
1 spoon butter
1 spoon plain flour
2 dl white wine
1.5 litres water
2 chicken stock cubes
1 bay leaf
1 coffee spoon of dried thyme
black pepper
salt

Preparation

1. Bring the water to the boil and dissolve the stock cubes.
2. Cut the peeled carrots and the celery in even strips of 2 cm by 1 cm.
3. Clean the leeks and cut them in rings of half a centimetre.
4. Finely chop the onion and the parsley.
5. Squeeze the lemon.
6. Bring the chicken stock back to the boil, together with the wine, thyme, bay leaf and parsley. When boiling put the chicken legs in. Put a lid on the pot and let it simmer for about 20 min.
7. Meanwhile melt the butter in a pot and stew the onion until translucent.
8. Add the leeks, carrots and celery and let stew for 10 min. Sprinkle with the flour and mix everything together well.
9. Take the chicken legs out of the stock and remove the skin. Put the legs aside.
10. Pour the stock through a sieve and pour it over the vegetables. Stir until the sauce begins to thicken slightly.
11. Add the baby potatoes and let simmer for 20 min.
12. Beat the egg yolk with the cream and the lemon juice. Put the chicken back in the sauce, lower the heat and stir the egg mixture in. Let the meal warm up again without letting it boil. Season with salt and pepper.

Enjoy!

What's On in Abingdon in April

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.

<p>1st April 7:30 – 9:30 pm</p>	<p>The King's Head and Bell</p>	<p><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.</p>
<p>2nd April 7:00 – 10:30 pm</p>	<p>Unicorn Theatre</p>	<p><u>Suntou Susso</u> An Intimate Evening with the Kora Step into an unforgettable evening with Suntou Susso, a captivating singer, performer and master of the kora – the 22-string West African harp whose sounds have enchanted listeners and carried the soul of Mandinka culture for over seven centuries. Born into a revered lineage of Gambian Griots: historians, storytellers and peacekeepers, Suntou is both a guardian of the tradition and a bold innovator of its future. Rooted in the ancient rhythms and spiritual depth of his heritage, Suntou's music is a bridge between worlds. Doors and bar 7 pm, music 7:15 pm £15 - £17</p>
<p>4th April 10:00 am – 28th June 4:00 pm</p>	<p>Abingdon County Hall Museum</p>	<p><u>Exhibition: MGA 70</u> Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the MGA, one of the most successful MG models, this exhibition looks at the development of the design, the influence of speed-record breakers and experimental prototypes, and it shines a spotlight on Syd Enever, the 'father' of the MGA. With memories of the MG factory still present in the town, we hope that this will be another MG story of interest to local people and to MG enthusiasts who visit us from around the world. To bring the story to life we will display MGA-related artefacts courtesy of the MG Car Club as well as the Museum's collection of MG models through the ages, from the very beginning to the 21st century. The MGA exhibit will run at Abingdon Museum until the end of June 2026. Be sure not to miss it! FREE ADMISSION</p>
<p>7th – 11th April Various times</p>	<p>Amey Theatre</p>	<p><u>AOS Presents: Beauty and the Beast</u> Abingdon Operatic Society are bringing the enchanted world of Broadway's classic, Disney's Beauty and the Beast, to Abingdon. Based on the Academy Award-winning animated feature, this international sensation – that has been produced in 37 countries worldwide – includes all of the wonderful songs written by Alan Menken and the late Howard Ashman, along with new songs by Mr. Menken and Tim Rice. The original Broadway production ran for over thirteen years and was nominated for nine Tony Awards, including Best Musical! The classic story tells of Belle, a young woman in a provincial town, and the Beast, a young prince trapped under the spell of an enchantress. If the Beast can learn to love and be loved, the curse will end and he will be transformed into his former self. But time is running</p>

		<p>out. If the Beast does not learn his lesson soon, he and his household will be doomed for all eternity... £14 - £20</p>
<p>10th April 7:30 – 9:30 pm</p>	<p>St Nicolas' Church</p>	<p><u>Medieval Music Concert</u> On Friday 10th April 2026 at 7:30 pm (doors 7:00 pm), at the historic St Nicolas' Church, Abingdon, Marco Cannavo and Steve Tyler present Musica Medievalis, an instrumental journey into the music of medieval Europe. Featuring hurdy-gurdy and its early predecessors, alongside harp, lute, citole, portative organ, bladder pipe, and tambourine, the concert explores rhythms and melodies from both sacred and secular traditions, interpreted with imaginative freedom while remaining rooted in historical sources. You won't want to miss it! See you there! £12 - £15</p>
<p>11th April 10:00 am - 2:00 pm</p>	<p>Guildhall, Unit 25, St Nicolas' Church, Market Place</p>	<p><u>Clubs and Societies Day</u> Join us at the Guildhall, Unit 25, St. Nicolas' Church and in the Market Place for Clubs and Societies Day 2026. This is a great opportunity to find out about the magnificent organisations that operate in Abingdon, from The Ramblers to The Rotary Club there is something for everyone!</p>
<p>13th April 8:00 – 10:00 pm</p>	<p>Methodist Church Hall</p>	<p><u>Abingdon Astronomical Society</u> There is a meeting of the Abingdon Astronomical Society on Monday 13th April where Peter Goodhew FRAS will give a talk titled: "Astrophotography Using Remote and Robotic Observatories". The meeting starts at 8.00 pm at the Methodist Church Hall, Dorchester Crescent, OX14 2AH. All welcome. More details at www.abingdonastro.org.uk</p>
<p>16th April 6:00 -7:00 pm</p>	<p>Abingdon Library</p>	<p><u>Carolyn Kirby – Cannonballs, Corsets and Coal – an 18th century story in 8 objects</u> Award-winning historical novelist Carolyn Kirby will deliver an illustrated talk exploring the background and historical context of her third novel, Ravenglass – a gripping 18th-century coming-of-age tale set on land and sea during Bonnie Prince Charlie's rebellion. A seasoned speaker and regular at literary events and festivals, Carolyn brings a wealth of experience and insight to her presentations. Tickets £2, including a welcome drink, are available from Abingdon Library, by calling 01865 815005 or email abingdon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk.</p>

<p>16th – 18th April 7:30 – 10:00 pm</p>	<p>Amey Theatre</p>	<p><u>OYMT presents: Les Misérables</u> <i>In 19th century France, Jean Valjean is released from imprisonment. He breaks his parole in the hope of starting a new life, initiating a life-long struggle for redemption as he is relentlessly pursued by police inspector, Javert, who refuses to believe that Valjean can change his ways. During the Paris student uprising of 1832, Javert must confront his morality after Valjean spares his life and saves that of the student revolutionary who has captured the heart of Valjean’s adopted daughter. Oxfordshire Youth Music Theatre presents a powerful and moving show which includes classic songs such as ‘Do You Hear the People Sing’, ‘I Dreamed a Dream’, ‘On My Own’ and many more. Immerse yourself in this timeless musical performed entirely by Oxfordshire school students supported by instrumentalists from Oxfordshire County Music Service. £16 - £18</i></p>
<p>18th April 7:30 – 9:00 pm</p>	<p>St Helen’s Church</p>	<p><u>An evening of Celtic songs and music</u> <i>Join us to hear Valentine Roland perform songs from Brittany, Cornwall and elsewhere. Valentine is also a talented player of the violin, guitar and tin whistle. She began her musical journey at age 14, performing a repertoire of traditional Celtic ballads at prominent events such as the Normandie Celtic Festival. Driven to expand her musical range, she took up the violin and was accepted into the Conservatoire de musique de Nîmes in France, where she earned her ABRSM Grade 8 with distinction in 2023. During this time, she joined the Celtic folk group JigFiz, performing at numerous concerts across the south of France. £10 - £16</i></p>
<p>21st April 6:45 pm</p>	<p>Amey Theatre</p>	<p><u>RBO Live: The Magic Flute</u> <i>Princess Pamina has been captured. Her mother, the Queen of the Night, tasks the young Prince Tamino with her daughter’s rescue. But when Tamino and his friendly sidekick, Papageno, embark on their adventure, they soon learn that when it comes to the quest for love, nothing is as it really seems. Guided by a magic flute, they encounter monsters, villains, and a mysterious brotherhood of men – but help, it turns out, comes when you least expect it. Mozart’s fantastical opera glitters in David McVicar’s enchanting production. A star cast including Julia Bullock as Pamina, Amitai Pati as Tamino, Huw Montague Rendall as Papageno, Kathryn Lewek as the Queen of the Night, and Soloman Howard as Sarastro, led by French conductor Marie Jacquot in her Covent Garden debut. This event will be streamed from the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. £14 - £16</i></p>
<p>23rd April 7:00 – 10:00 pm</p>	<p>Amey Theatre</p>	<p><u>National Theatre Live: All My Sons</u> <i>Bryan Cranston (Breaking Bad) and Marianne Jean-Baptiste (Hard Truths) feature in a five-star, triumphantly acclaimed new production of Arthur Miller’s play, from visionary director Ivo Van Hove (A View from the Bridge). One family, the heart of the American dream. When wartime delivers profits for Joe, it comes at a price when</i></p>

		<i>his partner is charged with criminal manufacturing deals, and his eldest son goes missing in action. Will peacetime bring peace of mind, or will he be confronted by the consequence of his actions? Filmed live from the West End, Paapa Essiedu (I May Destroy You), Tom Glynn-Carney (House of the Dragon), and Hayley Squires (I, Daniel Blake) also feature in this disturbingly prescient play. This production has an approximate running time of 135 minutes. £13.00 - £15.00</i>
23 rd April 7:00 – 10:30 pm	Unicorn Theatre	<u>Sorrel Nation</u> <i>Travelling troubadour Sorrel Nation brings a soulful mix of folk-rock to country and engages audiences with emotive lyrics, 70s inspired style and a voice full of soul that can truly open the heart. 2024 saw multiple new releases from Sorrel including a single featuring Steve Balsamo in May, the delicate and beautiful live EP 'Thirty Summers' in July and the critically acclaimed debut studio album 'Lost En Route' in October. Sorrel performed at Black Deer, Isle of Wight and Cambridge Folk Festivals amongst others and continues to tour the festival circuit over summer with The Magic Teapot music venue in her beloved campervan, Dory. Doors and bar 7 pm, music 7:15 pm £15 - £17</i>
27 th April 8:00 – 10:00 pm	Methodist Church Hall	<u>Abingdon Astronomical Society</u> <i>Abingdon Astronomical Society is having a 'Beginners Meeting' on Monday 27th April. The meeting starts at 8.00pm at the Methodist Church Hall, Dorchester Crescent, Abingdon, OX14 2AH. All welcome. Details can be found at http://abingdonastro.org.uk.</i>

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/

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Abingdon OX14 5LJ
01235 539291
membership@adtts.eu

Secretary
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07801 260262
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. (No publication in August)
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.



Photo: Brian Read