

## Aspects of Franconia

### Locked down in Franconia

If I had written “Locked up in Franconia”, I’m sure you would have thought of some horrible delinquent being thrown into a dreary prison cell hereabouts. Well, perhaps there isn’t too much difference between the two expressions after all. At the moment “Locked Down” and “Locked Up” sometimes seem pretty much the same!

Not always though, which explains some of the huge richness of the English language. “Speak up”/ “speak down”, “look up”/ “look down”; “knock up”/ “knock down”. Fascinating. Add a word to a common-or-garden verb, and we change the meaning completely. You see, this lockdown is a perfect opportunity for improving your language skills.

Back to the subject! We are now “locked down”, so what can we do to make it more tolerable? Read all the books you were given at Christmas by well-meaning friends and relatives. That means more sitting down, though, which is not good for the Christmas and post-Christmas waistline.

Go for a walk, then. Don your mask and take a ride on an empty bus to some distant terminus and explore a new area. Or plan a trip to somewhere new. Fairly close to me is Schniegling, located in Fürth and on the river Pegnitz, and close to some serious sewage works, and from there you can enjoy an amble through Johannis into the Old Town. Every time I have gone, I’ve been amazed at the large numbers of joggers, cyclists, dog-owners, brisk and slow walkers, fit mums pushing prams, fitter mums in snazzy lycra running with prams – all very impressive, and far better than sitting on a couch for hours on end. Remember that the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior expressly allows us exercise time in the fresh air!

What about a walk through the garden? At the moment, of course, gardens are still dormant, hibernating away, and in early January a little underwhelming. But it won’t be long before the first snowdrops emerge and the all-so-colourful crocuses. We’ll have to wait a month or two for the daffs, but they can go into the next Newsletter. Crocuses, however, will soon be with us. They are wonderfully colourful and are distributed across central and southern Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia all the way to western China. In other words, they aren’t native to our climes, but, introduced long ago, they now cheer us up every spring. One variety was a source of saffron and this ancient Minoan fresco from the island of Santorini in the Aegean Sea (on the left) depicts women gathering the prized spice. One day we can go on holiday again to these lovely places. On the right is my garden. Something to look forward to now, during the lockdown! Even Covid19 can’t hold back the spring.



Take care, Frank

