

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

May 2017

Dear Franconians,

Thanks to the efforts and expertise of our new members, Nancy and David Griffiths, we can now boast a new Webpage and two new Facebook sites, one open to anyone interested in what we are up to, the other a closed Facebook only accessible to our members. The website can be found simply by typing in Franconian Society, though for those who love accuracy the precise address is: www.franconian-society.de/

It's a superb website, well-structured, easy to navigate, bright and cheerful, with masses of information about our activities, past and present. The comments so far received have been overwhelmingly positive. Well done David, who incidentally created the website for free and will serve as its administrator.

Nancy Griffiths, his wife, has lots of experience setting up and using Facebook and has given us two extremely attractive sites, the one, as I have said, for society members only, the other for anyone interested in our activities: www.facebook.com/FranconianSociety/

What led to this flurry of activity was, and remains, our long-term commitment to attract new and youthful members to our society. Please remember what "youthful" means, namely "young or seeming young", "people aspiring to remain youthful". That's why we welcome all ages at the Franconian Society as we know that some of our best and most active and, admittedly, elderly members are full of ideas, brilliantly helpful, and unstoppably cheerful. Spread the word! We also need a few spring chickens, though, to take over some time from the centenarians.

Putting social media aside, what else is there to report on? In March we moved from political cartoons in Tanzania, knowledgeably explained by Pfarrer Jäschke, to the peaceful, medieval collections of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, and by the end of March we were in the hi-tech world of the Fraunhofer Institut, investigating the cunning technology sewn into the fabric of a "fitness shirt". Something for everyone, you might say.

Not that April was any different. We had a sunny visit to Nuremberg zoo and caught a glimpse of their newly-born rhino, were shown how strong an ostrich egg could be and were introduced to cute meerkats and uninhibited baboons. And a few birds of the feathered variety featured on our chilly ornithological walk through the Mohrhof bird sanctuary, but our spirits, after a brief encounter with some hail, picked up when we paused in Poppenwind for coffee and Glühwein and in Hesselberg for a Franconian hot Sunday lunch. I even heard someone say we should return in the summer when we might be blessed with warmer temperatures.

At the Stammtisch on April 7th we were treated to another well-organized Pub Quiz (Yvonne compiled the questions, Bridget marked the answers, and Becky found the rewards for the well-informed). Everyone present had an excellent time, so thanks again to Yvonne, in particular, for thinking up some testing questions.

Teresa's Dinner Club Evenings seem to be stirring up more and more interest and, in the course of the year, we will even be venturing to Nuremberg to indulge in Franconian, Turkish and French cuisine, while in July we'll be in Kosbach to enjoy an excellent dinner as well as the Fischerei Jazz Festival. The next Dinner Club gathering, on May 20th, is in the Hexenhäusle at Vestnertorgraben 4 and I offered to say a few words about the castle and its fortifications before we get down to the serious business of eating "Franconian". The Vestnertor is, as you know, the northern entrance to the castle and the so-called Hexahäusla, dating back to 1445, was at one time a toll house or customs building. And the magnificent, state of the art fortifications we see all around, sometimes referred to as the Schwedenbastei, go back to 1538-45. There's a lot to see.

In the late spring and summer we have a whole host of interesting events. On 27th May we are off to Ingolstadt to visit the Medical Museum (see article on the website) and the Old Town, while in July Valerie will be taking us to Coburg. And please don't forget the two-day excursion into Thuringia in October. It's time to sign up for three interesting trips! And there are organized walks to look forward to, Stammtische, and, of course, the Bergkirchweih, where the Franconians traditionally meet at Fleischmanns Garten.

Before I leave you, however, may I thank a number of unnamed members for all the hard work they put in to ensure that the "Erlanger Frühling" was a success – a large amount of money was raised here for our charity work. A quite different event, the Erlangen "Rädl" on May 1st, also required a good bit of organizing. At the AGM on the 21st April we heard from Sieghard, our Treasurer, that never before had so much money been donated to our Society. Our 2nd Vice President, Ingeborg, requested that her birthday guests should not give her presents, but that a donation be made to our society. Mairi (Barkei) was also so kind as to ask for a donation for our society instead of flowers or a wreath when we took leave of Lothar, her late husband. Warm thanks go to them both for their generosity of spirit.

And so it remains for me to wish you all a wonderful May and June. I'm sure you'd all agree that warmer and drier weather is just what we all need as we set out for the summer. So may there be lots of it.

Frank Gillard