

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

September 2017 – this time from our 1st Vice President

Dear Franconians,

While our president and his wife are enjoying August in America, visiting family and friends and celebrating their round birthdays, the task of writing the President's Letter has fallen to me. And that is something I will enjoy doing, for the past two months in the Franconian Society have offered a variety of interesting events. Summer may be a fairly quiet time in Erlangen, but our Society has certainly been active!

Whereas our summer here in Germany has, for the most part, been unsettled and not always as warm as we might have liked, it has still been possible for us to sit outside for supper at Turnerbund on two occasions. The first of these was at our July Stammtisch, before Gabriele and Frank Baumeister gave us a fascinating power point presentation, accompanied by peaceful, meditative music. The topic was 'Germany through the Seasons' and expert photography had captured the incredible beauty and wide range of colours and moods of the German landscape during each season of the year. In recognition of this presentation, we gave a donation to a kindergarten in Büchenbach for its work with socially-disadvantaged, handicapped and refugee children, for which the Baumeisters thanked us with a kind note and a beautifully photographed flower. The second occasion was at our 'Under the Oak Tree' Stammtisch, traditionally held in August, when a very cheerful group of Society members gathered to enjoy supper and a chat together. This year, the evening was combined with a small book sale, which brought in 70 Euros for our charity endeavours. Many thanks to Becky, Yvonne and Teresa for sorting and transporting the books to and from Turnerbund. It was well worth the effort and much appreciated by those who found some interesting summer reading material!

Future Stammtisch evenings include our president's talk in October on the great reformer Luther, one of the Society's contributions to the Luther Year, while in November, we have been lucky enough to get Dr Helmut Haberkamm, the well-known Erlangen author, to come and talk to us about Franconian dialects. His talks are always a treat and definitely not to be missed!

Christoph Hellwig also took advantage of the good mid-July weather to organise an interesting walk through the countryside around Neunkirchen-am-Brand. This is not the first walk successfully organised by him and it was greatly enjoyed by the considerable number of participants. Thank you, Christoph! Our last Happy Hiking Boots walk of this year is being led by Mairi Barkei on 1st October to take advantage of the autumn colours. And just as our walks have become popular events, so also have our Dinner Club evenings.

As so often, Teresa again organized two excellent Dinner Club events for July and August: in July, the Fischerstechen at Oberle's in Kosbach – an extremely humorous and entertaining event and, for some of the large group of members who attended, a first-time experience. In August we had a chance to try exquisite French cuisine at the Prison St. Michel in Nuremberg. To you also, Teresa, our heartfelt thanks for two most enjoyable Dinner Club occasions. She is very much looking forward to the revival of what was once a very popular event: Dinner with a Difference on 7th October. For those who know what this involves, come and take a nostalgic trip down memory lane; for those who will be experiencing such an event for the first time, come to what is an utterly entertaining evening and a fun way to add to our charity funds!

How about our upcoming excursions? Valerie Hellmann may have room for the day trip to Coburg on 9th September and Frank Gillard definitely has room for the two-day Thuringia trip in October. Both need to be contacted immediately if you are interested in taking part.

Don't forget that members are invited to attend an afternoon reading of a play written by the local journalist, Margrit Vollertsen-Diewerge, to raise money for charity and afterwards to go to Murphy's Law for an Irish pub supper.

On a thoughtful note, a small group of Franconian Society members attended the memorial coffee in honour of Eric Bach in early August. We, together with members of Eric's family, recalled our fondest memories of him at the cafe where Eric had celebrated his 87th birthday not too long before his death. It was a sad, but in many ways very moving occasion, since it became clear through these recollections how much Eric had meant to so many different people and how deep his influence on our Society had been. He will be very much missed and leaves behind an unfillable gap. How grateful we are, though, that we had Eric with us in the Franconian Society for so many years.

Now, as I write this, August is slowly drawing to a close and people are gradually returning from what we hope have been interesting and relaxing summer holidays. We hope, too, that you will find time to join us for the numerous upcoming events. Looking forward to seeing you.

Bridget Ineichen