

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

July 2018

Dear Franconians,

By the time you read this, the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, will have passed. How we yearn in February and March for the days to get longer and warmer, so we can sit outside in balmy June and July and barbecue amid the mosquitoes, and yet all the while aware that autumn is waiting in the wings. *“And summer’s lease hath all too short a date”*, said the bard (of Avon), while good old Enid Blyton* wrote in one of her Famous Five books: *“I do love the beginning of the summer hols,”* said Julian. *They always seem to stretch out ahead for ages and ages.* *‘They go so nice and slowly at first,’* said Anne, his little sister. *‘Then they start to gallop.’*

How right she was. Summer suddenly appears and you have to grab it before it fades, before it gallops off into autumn. Under the Oak Tree (in July and August) is as good a place as any to do this, a good place to share your summer anecdotes on a warm evening in front of an overlaid plate of Turnerbund cooking. A good place to discuss the events and talks with which we have tried to interest you.

The visit to the Zeidelmuseum in Feucht on 16th June was the most recent and certainly one of the most interesting. Fascinating might be a more appropriate adjective considering all we heard about bees and their unimaginable resourcefulness. We learnt about queen bees, workers and drones, about honey, beeswax, royal jelly and propolis. And, of course, about the Zeidler, the wild-honey gatherers in the Imperial Forest and the beekeepers who keep their hives in their back gardens. After a hesitant start, eighteen Franconians signed up, who after the museum sat in the garden of a Thai restaurant for a good meal and a good chat.

On 17th May about the same number travelled to the Planetarium in Nuremberg for a presentation in English on the possibility of extra-terrestrial life, and afterwards we were treated to a short talk on the history of the planetarium and its technology. It is only a few hundred yards from the Plärrer and hence very easy to get to from Erlangen. I’m sure more would have come if they had realized how accessible it is.

In May we had a number of other events, starting with the so-called Rädli on May Day, when families cycle around the city getting some fresh air and learning about the city’s many societies and clubs, of which we are but one! Hardly any of our members turned up. It was a pretty chilly day, but we did have the opportunity to talk to a number of potential new members. Many thanks have to go to Bridget and Teresa and others for setting everything up, bringing games for the children to play and providing the Rädli’s guessing game. If that has left you guessing, then come to next year’s event!

May is also the month when Teresa reserves tables for us at the Bergkirchweih. This is usually a popular event in our calendar, but this year quite a few of our regulars were out of town and our numbers were slightly lower than in the recent past. Teresa’s choice of venue (Fleischmann’s Garten) is perfect in that food is close at hand, queues negligible and the noise levels tolerable. Well done to Teresa.

Our May Stammtisch at the beginning of the month was a very informative talk on the work of the Erlangen “Lebenshilfe”. Despite our affluent society – and Erlangen definitely belongs to the more affluent cities and towns in Germany – there are so many people of all ages and backgrounds that are desperate for extra support that we have to be immensely grateful for organizations like Lebenshilfe and their dedicated workers. If you weren’t at the talk and want to know more, perhaps about how you could help as a volunteer, why not take a peep at their journal “Treffpunkt”. I’m sure you can find it in their own shop (Nürnbergstr. 47), which, incidentally, is full of wonderful gift ideas, especially for children.

This reminds me, of course, that on 26th April, just before the completion of the last Newsletter, we had visited another organization helping people deal with serious life issues. This is Wabe, established in 1987 to provide support for people with psychological issues. Its main goals are to provide help with accommodation, to offer employment in a supervised workshop, and to assist people reintegrate into society. It also runs a meeting centre (wabene) in Erlangen’s Henkestrasse. If you come to the coffee afternoon at wabene on 26th July, organized by Teresa, you can see for yourself what a pleasant building it is.

Our Stammtisch on 8th June was our traditional pub-quiz organized yet again by Yvonne, our consummate quiz mistress. Some of us walk away from these evenings feeling totally distraught over memory loss and sheer stupidity, but everyone who took part was given some chocolate, a known remedy for depression. Yvonne no doubt will find some more tricky questions for next year. Bring on the chocolate.

While it's summer still, let me point you in the direction of our country walks! We had a gorgeous day on 13th May for our circular Walberle hike starting in Kirchehrenbach, which Christoph organized for everyone, even managing to avoid a thunderstorm or two, so we all returned to our cars dry and in good spirits. Mairi has organized the next walk scheduled for 24th June. It begins in Streitberg and will take us to Muggendorf and along the romantic Wiesent. It augurs well and I do hope a good few will be able to make it. The next Newsletter will contain the report!

Before I close, let me mention the funeral of our first President, Paul von Tucher. The church where he had often preached himself, the Erlangen Altstädter Kirche, saw a very large congregation gathering to pay their last respects to the man who was born in India, had worked as a minister in the USA and who had spent his final decades in Erlangen. It was here, over thirty years ago, that he founded our society, for which we are all truly grateful. A publication commemorating his life is being planned by Ingeborg. After the service Paul was laid to rest in the beautiful graveyard outside the Tucher chapel in Simmelsdorf. Our thoughts are with Becky and his children and grandchildren.



Well that is all from me, just before I leave for my holidays in France, and then England. Unfortunately, I will miss Valerie's excursion to Kulmbach on 21st July, but I hope I am an exception! Do go along and give her your support.

Dear members of the Franconian Society, I hope your summer break was or will be unforgettable and that you didn't feel that your vacation "galloped" away overly quickly. We'll see each other again, I'm sure, before the autumn! **Frank Gillard**

**Enid Mary Blyton (1897 –1968) was an English children's writer whose books have been among the world's best-sellers since the 1930s, selling more than 600 million copies. Blyton's books are still enormously popular, and have been translated into 90 languages.*