

# LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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**May 2018**

*Dear Franconians,*

In our May Newsletter of 2017 I talked about our new Website, which David Griffiths had kindly designed for us. Over the last year we have done our best to make it an attractive source of information about our events, past and present. I hope you have a look at it occasionally and won't hesitate to recommend it to your friends who might be interested in joining us.

I'm also pleased to report that we have gained a modest number of new members over the past couple of months, no easy task for many societies these days. But there is still a lot to be done. That's why the *Erlanger Frühling*, where so many of you contributed some very convincing cakes and, above all, your time, is such an important event in terms of advertising our society. Bridget, who was in charge of the organisation, has told me that we made €423 for our charity work. Given that the weather on the 18<sup>th</sup> March was as un-spring-like as it could be, I think we can be truly proud of ourselves, so a huge thanks to all who were involved in the baking of cakes, the brewing of coffee and tea, the setting up of our stand and the tidying up afterwards.

Another event in a similar vein is the *Erlanger Rädli*, which takes place on May 1<sup>st</sup>. By then, of course, the weather really ought to be more inviting, and, if a lot of Erlangen families jump on their bikes, then our advertising efforts might achieve their just rewards. If you like cycling, please come and bring your friends!

I wrote quite a lot for the last Franconian Newsletter on our charity work, which I consider one of the mainstays of our society. At the last Annual General Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> April quite a bit was said about how much we have given to various charities over the years and that we should broadcast our efforts to a wider public, through the medium of the press, for example. We'll keep this in mind.

Looking back now over the last couple of months, let me mention first of all our February outing to Frauenaurach, its monastic church, the local museum and the early 18<sup>th</sup> century inn, the *Schwarzer Adler*. We began our tour on a devilishly cold afternoon in what had been a Dominican convent founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Frauenaurach's name (Aue = meadow and Ache = river, stream "where nuns lived") reminds us of its history and location.



Frau Jutta Triantafyllidis, the lady in charge of the museum, first gave us a detailed tour of the church, very prominent in this 1839 view adjacent. Afterwards we walked over to the "*Amtshausschüpfla*", as the local museum is known, with its lovingly presented Easter egg exhibition. And finally, we retired to the nearby *Schwarzer Adler* to end a very successful day.

This interest on our part in Franconian customs continued, of course, with Hanne Schmidt's well-received talk at our April *Stammtisch*. She told us about shady characters from our region, and some benevolent ones, too, and also the rich tapestry of events and traditions that make Franconia so fascinating. Many thanks to her!

A month earlier we had our "India" *Stammtisch* with Sundaram Iyer, who took us back through the centuries to the early rulers of this great subcontinent and forward to a few of the pressing issues now facing contemporary India. It was an excellent talk and we had a good question-and-answer session afterwards. Thank you Sundaram! I should also note that our Dinner Club in March met, very appropriately, at the Restaurant Boliwood in Erlangen. Thanks, Teresa, for arranging everything.

Unfortunately, our first "hike" of the year coincided with the Easter holiday and another spell of unhelpful weather, which doubtlessly diminished our members' enthusiasm. It would have taken us to Bieberbach, the largest decorated well in the Fränkische Schweiz – a great pity as we'll have to wait a whole year before we can enjoy another Easter-themed walk. At the AGM it was suggested that we should consider, among other things,

more manageable, shorter walks. I'm sure, once the summer comes, interest in pleasant hikes in convivial company will once more pick up.

Our AGM was somewhat poorly attended, I thought, especially as this was the occasion to re-elect our committee. Our member, Sangeeta Kumar, has left the committee and has been replaced by a new face: Uschi Stamminger. Actually, Uschi has been very active in the relatively short space of time that she has been with us, so for many she isn't such a new face at all. Congratulations to her. It's always good to have change on the committee and we look forward to a close partnership. Turning to Sangeeta, allow me to say that we are extremely appreciative of all that she has done for the society over many, many years. I hope she will remain a trusted advisor on all matters close to her heart, especially when it comes to reaching out to young families.

*So until the next Newsletter and some warm sunshine, look after yourselves and stay active and committed to what we stand for – friendship, Franconia, and helping the less fortunate!*

**Frank Gillard**