

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

July 2019

Dear Franconians

What a success!! The biggest event since our last Newsletter (May 2019) was the 35th Anniversary Dinner, celebrated in great style at the Fischerei Oberle in Kosbach. 77 people attended and many of those, less prejudiced than me, and who have attended many such events, have claimed it was the best one ever. The choice of restaurant both in terms of food and service proved perfect, the tables with their floral decorations were a delight to behold, the speeches, the singing, the sketches – it was all of a very, very high standard. Thank you to everyone who helped make it so memorable – in particular, of course, the sub-committee (Bridget, Frank, Sieghard, Valerie, Yvonne), who devoted so much time to making it a success. In a separate section we'll quote what a few of you said about the evening.

Our Stammtisch on 3rd May was extremely well attended with 47 Franconians coming to listen to Mairi giving us her take on contemporary Australia. This was not a "holiday down-under" presentation, but a serious look at some of the pressures bearing down on a country that has had to reorientate itself dramatically over the last few decades. By 2013-14, Asia already accounted for 83.0 per cent of Australia's merchandise exports, and, whereas wool and wheat once dominated export trade, today it is iron-ore and coal. The effects on the environment have been significant. These and other reflections on a country she knows extremely well gave Mairi's talk a quality that engaged her audience from start to finish. Well done.

Another talk in May – a lecture on the English poet, painter and visionary William Blake – was provided by the Nuremberg Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft, headed by our own member Bill Blundell. Told that they were short of a room for their speaker on that particular night, we were pleased to offer a little assistance and several of our members went along to listen. We are all aware, I dare say, of the importance of Blake in the English literary canon, but his influence on German writers and artists is less familiar. Dr. Erle, who has made this subject one of her special interests, successfully put this to right.

Now it's summer again, we enjoyed the June Stammtisch sitting together at the Turnerbund "Under the Oak Tree". Becky and her team auctioned off a few books and, before one could say Jack Robinson, almost 60 euros had fallen into our charity pot. Our next outdoor Stammtisch will be in August, often a rather quiet gathering, so please come along and enjoy the opportunity for a good chat with some very nice people.

Erlangen's renowned Bergkirchweih will have been laid to rest by the time you read this, but I am sure that our visit there, in the last few years organised by Teresa, was another success. Did you know that the first birthday of the Berch was on 21st April, 1755, when the city council decided on the relocation of the event to the Burgberg and that it has been celebrated there for the last 262 years? And why was it cancelled in these years: 1770-1772, 1886, 1915-1920 and 1940-1945?

Happy Hiking Boots is a more or less stable feature of our calendar of activities in the warmer months. The last one was organised by Mairi and was a very pleasant walk from near Marloffstein to Atzelsberg, where we sat in the beer-garden and enjoyed lunch.



There were only ten of us altogether – and a dog – and we had a lovely, leisurely walk through shady woodland, past ponds, springs and former quarries, which, as Mairi told us, were a major source of the stone for Erlangen town houses in the 17th and 18th centuries. The point I would like to make is that the walk was highly enjoyable and in no way overly strenuous. Mairi is very skilled at hitting the right level of difficulty! So please come along to our next walks. They are very manageable.

Perhaps you are wondering what is coming up in the next few months? On 5th July, our guest speaker is Dinah Radtke. She will talk to us about the difficulties faced by the handicapped in everyday life. Dinah is a translator of English and French and has contributed hugely to the well-being of so many people with mobility issues in our city and beyond, in recognition of which she received not only the Verdienstkreuz am Bande der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in 2000, and the Verdienstkreuz 1. Klasse der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in 2009, but, in 2016, was also awarded the Ehrenbürgerwürde der Stadt Erlangen. Dinah has been a great campaigner for the Independent Living Movement and was, indeed, co-founder of the Centre for Independent Living in Erlangen in 1987. Please come and enjoy an informative evening.

A couple of excursions are being planned at the moment, one to Neuburg a.d. Donau scheduled for Saturday 14th September, and another to the Franconian wine-growing area. They both need all your support, so please bear them in mind and register as soon as possible, even though they seem to be a long way into the future.

Well, that more or less concludes this month's President's Newsletter. The said President is currently finishing his preparations for his summer holidays, which, courtesy of a certain airline, will soon offer him his first glimpse of Iceland, and he is getting increasingly excited about hot springs and geysers, volcanic ash, lava beds, glaciers and the Northern Lights. I will be sharing my pictures of Iceland with you at the October Stammtisch. And, of course, if your travels have taken you somewhere spectacular, we would love to hear from you and would be pleased to plan you into our upcoming schedule.

Take care and continue to have a good summer.

Frank Gillard