

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

May 2019

Dear Franconians,

Sometimes it takes a while to shake off winter cobwebs. Perhaps it's the winter stiffness in the joints, perhaps a few extra pounds gained during Christmas and New Year binges. A remedy, however, is in sight, in the shape of Franconian Society walks, beginning with a trip on Friday 26th April, organized by Christoph, to marvel at the Easter wells out in the Fränkische Schweiz. It's a great opportunity to spend time with like-minded people, to enjoy an extremely old tradition in these parts, and indulge in the spring.

Our second walk – this time with more “walking” involved – has been organized by Mairi Barkei. Details can be found in this Newsletter. And then Christoph returns with walks in June and July. So, there you go, spring and summer walks to unstiffen the old pins.

Because of the AGM on Friday, 5th April, we decided to forego a Stammtisch evening in that month, so that our next one will be about Australia on 3rd May. You might well have guessed that the perfect presenter of all things Australian is our own Mairi, who tends to spend the colder months of Germany basking/sweltering in the hotter climes of “Down

Under”, keeping herself very up to date on any new developments in that part of the southern hemisphere. “How to be a traveller and not a tourist in Australia” is the title of her talk.



Easter Well in the Fränkische Schweiz

Not long after, on Friday, 10th May, we can greet members of the *Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft* from Nuremberg for a talk on the celebrated British poet William Blake (*And did those feet...*). Please come in good numbers and give your support to Bill Blundell, the President of the Nuremberg DBG.

A little later, on Saturday, 18th May, our 35th anniversary will be celebrated at the Fischerei Oberle in Kosbach. Yvonne wrote a piece about it for our March Newsletter. If you haven't signed up for it yet, please do so as soon as possible. The food, the speeches, the entertainment will be wonderful!

So now let me put the car into reverse and catch up on some of our past events. On 21st February a good few of our members gathered in the Jewish Museum in Fürth and enjoyed a tour of one of the more important Jewish museums in these parts. It's a small building with a modern extension and features many different aspects of Jewish life. In the cellar can be found a medieval mikva, a Jewish ritual bath, while in the top part of the building we were shown a sukkah or succah – a temporary hut constructed for use during the week-long Jewish festival of Sukkot, which commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. I think everyone agreed that the museum is well worth a visit.

The March Stammtisch was a Pub Quiz, which was almost struck low by illness, but thanks to the sterling efforts of Bridget and Valerie went off splendidly.

There were also a couple of Dinner Club gatherings in the last couple of months. More and more people seem to be going along to enjoy different cuisines and each other's company, all thanks to Teresa's promotional skills, but allow me to thank Valerie for organizing the last such Dinner Club event (in Teresa's absence). The next one, of course, calls itself “Franconians on the Berg” and will start at 11.45 on Saturday 15th June. Yes, it's *Bergkirchweih* time again! How time flies.

Disappointingly, no one turned up for the exhibition in the Erlangen City Hall on right-wing extremism in Germany. George Mills, who had been there at the opening, offered to guide us through the exhibition, but despite email notification his kind offer wasn't taken up. Thanks go to George, nonetheless, for volunteering his time, knowledge and services.

Regarding our young Syrian who was so horribly disfigured when a paraffin container exploded in the bathroom of her house, all I can say at the moment is that a renewed application is being filed with the American authorities. I noticed that, disappointingly in my eyes, relatively few of our members signed the petition. However, the number of signatories

worldwide has grown beyond 30,000! Quite an achievement. I will, of course, keep you posted on the latest developments as soon as I receive news. **[Ed. note: see Marwa's poem on page 7]**

And coming right up to date: Just a short while ago it was the *Erlanger Frühling* that came without snow, but with temperatures to entice people to the *Neustädter Kirchenplatz*. Bridget did a splendid job organizing everything and with her team of bakers and helpers it was a cheerful event. I believe she has now reckoned up how much money was spent on the wonderful cakes made by our members, the proceeds going this year to the *Förderverein Tagespflege*. To find out more, take a look at her article.

Well, that's all from me for now. The next Newsletter will be written when the summer has truly arrived. In the meantime, enjoy the cherry blossom in Kalchreuth, the spring flowers in the countryside, and the birdsong all around us. I went to the new Dinosaur museum in the Altmühl area a short while ago and was reminded that the sparrows and blackbirds and finches that populate our gardens are all descended from ginormous feathered reptilians, and how short an existence we have on this ancient planet. Conclusion: The earth is a fascinating place and we should enjoy every second of our existence upon it!

Frank Gillard