

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

July 2020

Dear Franconians,

When I was much younger, I used to enjoy a weekly radio broadcast on the BBC unassumingly entitled “Letter from America”. The format was simple. The British-American journalist Alistair Cooke would hold a monologue lasting fourteen or fifteen minutes on some topical aspect of American cultural or political life, invariably delivered in a quiet, educated, charmingly informed manner. It was always compulsive listening. Sometimes there were great things to talk about – a women’s lib march in 1975, a John Wayne obituary in 1979, the assassination of J.F. Kennedy in 1963. But sometimes not. Cooke had the skill, acquired or otherwise, of investing interest in the seemingly unimportant. Do I, I wonder.

My Letter from the President normally has a lot to report on, but our “lock-down” – we have not had a meeting or an event since the last Newsletter – has put paid to that. I am faced with a void, a blank, and have nothing to tell you about. I am hard-pressed indeed.

Not quite true. In fact, I must tell you about our first meeting at the Turnerbund scheduled for August 7th. We would love to see you sitting under the Oak Tree but must stress that we need to know exactly how many are coming so that we can inform the proprietor and work out the seating arrangements.

Something else that I should remind you of is our AGM, which has been postponed until the autumn. Nominations for standing on our committee can still be submitted, of course. You have a few more weeks to mull this one over and display your motivation to help our society move on to better things.

And I could mention that one of our committee members – Uschi Stamminger – has kindly had copies of our “Special Editions” printed for anyone interested in acquiring a valuable “testimony to the times”. Just think how your great-grandchildren will feel when they learn of the awful times you had to endure at the start of the 21st century’s third decade. The modest price of 19 euros hardly reflects the gravity of our publication.

But that is about it. I could talk about the weather for a sentence or two – a ploy often used by the author – but even the weather is disturbingly uninteresting at the moment. It’s mixed. And not memorable.

Covid19 is anything but; but we have heard so much about it over the last few months that tedium seems to have replaced immediate alarm. No longer hearing that imbibing kitchen disinfectant could beat the bug, there is little emanating from the western world’s centre of power to make us sit up and quake (with regard to corona at least). President Xi-Jiping, on the other hand, is a different kettle of fish. No merciless tweets to confuse us. Quake we may, nonetheless.

And so I come to the close of this very quiet, rather unspecial President’s Letter. The next time I write, it will be a different story. Hopefully.

Frank Gillard