

Welcome, 2022. We've been waiting for you.

Despite the title of this President's Letter, my wife and I decided not to stay up until after midnight welcoming in the New Year. After all the activity and overindulgence at Christmas we were simply too exhausted. Normally we would have wandered over to the large Christmas tree just outside the village church, clutching a bottle of champagne and a couple of glasses, to wish our neighbours and ourselves a happy 2022, excited by the colourful fireworks lighting up the sky above and slightly alarmed at the explosions at ground level.

But not this year. Pyrotechnics were banned, and, in bed, I briefly woke to hear the odd, illegal banger, and then immediately fell asleep again. 2021 was put to bed silently, and the welcoming party for 2022 failed to materialize. After such a difficult 2021, it seemed at the time to be the appropriate thing. I suspect that for a great many of you it was rather similar.

Now though, a few days into January, I feel that we might be doing 2021 a slight injustice. After all, there were times when life seemed to be getting back to normal. We went to concerts and the cinema, enjoyed family visits, even went on vacation. Admittedly not as freely as in pre-endemic days, but long lockdowns didn't take place. We were cautious and carried on. The Franconian Society, notably the handicrafts group, went on raising money for different charities, we had guest speakers and even the occasional walk in the fresh air. True, there were restrictions and cancellations, and we had little choice but to accept them stoically, and to tell ourselves that next year will be a much happier affair. Well next year has arrived, very quietly, almost on tiptoe. I think it will be a happier affair.

We have every reason to be optimistic. Vaccines have worked wonders already, and there is every reason to believe that, if we remain cautious, the current storm of infections will abate, and we can soon return to normal life again, even if "normal life" encompasses wearing masks in shops and sensible social distancing. And we can start planning events for the new year. Starting off with a pleasant walk somewhere close to home. As soon as the weather forecasters predicts a patch of dry sunny weather, I'll let you know.

As you know, we now have a new committee, which will hopefully be meeting shortly to put together our programme for the first part of 2022.

I always feel that once Christmas is over and New Year has begun, spring can't be too far away. We'll have some snow, of course, and winter won't depart without a fight, but the bulbs we planted some time ago in autumn will be eager to see the light of day and we will all feel reinvigorated. There's so much that's good to look forward to.

So may I wish you all, in the name of the board and the committee, a good and optimistic start to 2022. Be patient for a little longer, and above all stay healthy and happy.

Frank Gillard

Resolution humour and resolution thoughts

"What was the caterpillar's New Year's resolution? To turn over a new leaf."

Frank Sinatra

"The best is yet to come."

Steve Harvey

"You are never too old to reinvent yourself."

Alfred Lord Tennyson

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true."



Bill Vaughan: "Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to."

Melody Beattie: "The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written."

Alfred Lord Tennyson: "Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, 'it will be happier.'"

William E. Vaughn: "An optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves."

Neale Donald Walsch: "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone."

Oprah Winfrey: "Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

And a hundred years ago

- "Tutanchamun, 1332 bis 1323 BC, was discovered in the Valley of the Kings by Howard Carter...
- the flu epidemic claimed 804 victims in Britain...
- Judy Garland, Doris Day, Pierre Cardin, Charles Schulz (Charlie Brown) were born...
- the novel Ulysses by James Joyce was published in Paris on the author's 40th birthday...
- in British India, Mahatma Gandhi was sentenced to six years in prison for sedition...
- the Irish Free State came into being...