

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

July 2022

Dear Franconians,

I was chatting to a member at the Bergkirchweih last week who told me that she simply couldn't understand how quickly her life had gone by. A few years over eighty and still very active, and clearly a lady who had had an extremely interesting working life in Germany and abroad, it made me stop and think about the passing of time, i.e. getting old, and how we all react differently to this unavoidable dilemma. Well, hardly a dilemma, simply a state of affairs. Some are always on the go and can't remember what they were doing the day before, others travel more slowly and see fewer things but savour each one all the more intensely. You take your choice.

What I also wanted to say, however, was that the Bergkirchweih gathering is another example of how useful a society such as ours can be. It can so easily provide our members opportunities to share their thoughts and feelings, and to learn from one another. It was organised by Teresa who has another dinner club event scheduled for Saturday 9th July at 6pm, this one in the "Biergarten am Röthelheim", one of Erlangen's nicest beer gardens. I highly recommend it but come early to have enough time to find a good parking spot! Or come by bus.



And the Dinner Club continues with a gathering at La Stella (Bäregarten) on Friday, 5th August, in fact a combined Stammtisch and Dinner Club evening as the Turnerbund has prior bookings and simply can't accommodate us. La Stella is a very good Italian restaurant, so enter it now in your diary, and, of course, inform Teresa.

Our Happy Hiking Boots walk along the Bitterbach gorge was a huge success. Instead of the scheduled rain the sun shone, the temperature was perfect, and we thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. But there were only five of us present, including the writer and his two Chinese friends! In other words, only three FS members!! What went wrong? Some regulars were away on holiday, one was injured, others might have been put off by the ominous weather forecast. Sadly, I am beginning to think that Happy Hiking Boots is simply not appropriate for a society such as ours where too many members struggle with hip and knee problems and are convinced a Gillard walk would be too demanding. But take a look at what one is missing:



May I point out that the footpath is not the bed of the Bitterbach, but a pretty level path up on the right! And what a wonderful piece of countryside it is. And only half an hour from Erlangen. But if so few people can come along, has Happy Hiking Boots a real future? I would very much appreciate your views on this – because, of course, organising any trip is time-consuming in one way or another.

We had our first post-pandemic talk on May 6th given by Karin Berger-Graef and her husband Friedrich Graef. It was excellent and made a number of us itchy for a bit of serious travelling again, especially to destinations which are so very different – geologically and culturally - to what we are used to here in Europe. Let me thank them again for putting up with all the cancellations they had to endure, but we got there in the end!

The trip to Schillingsfürst is the first coach excursion we have had for a good while and I will report on it in the September edition, but here are two photos as a foretaste. All I can say now is that thirty-three people came along and the weather couldn't have been better.





Before I close, let me mention that a sizeable donation has been earmarked by the Franconian Society for Ukrainian children undergoing treatment in the Erlangen Children's Hospital. Bridget has informed me that a total of 1,000 euros (550 euros from the Easter Bazaar; 450 euros from our society) has now been given. Bridget is also planning a 'Talent Evening for the Ukraine' and has already been in contact with a number of members. Please contact her if you want to help. It sounds to me like an excellent idea, and I wish her every success.

Well, that more or less concludes my President's Letter. I shall be away in France and England for a good bit of time between now and mid-August, but I am easily contactable should the need arise. And we do have two excellent vice-presidents and a secretary to turn to should you have any questions. So let me wish you all a very pleasant July and August, stay healthy and alert and I'm sure we'll see each other before the summer is out.

Frank Gillard