

Letter from the President

I wonder whether you feel like me totally depressed at what is going on in the world at the present time. I'll spare you the details as you all know what I am referring to. Too many people are either shivering with fear or shivering from cold. Both quite unacceptable.

But there is always hope, and that's why I thought I would place my flower picture at the top of this month's report, which I took in my garden just a few days ago. It's a Jerusalem artichoke, a plant that is a sheer joy for the cheerful yellow flowers it creates, the tasty tubers it produces, and even the linguistic confusion it generates.



Despite its English name, the Jerusalem artichoke has no relationship to Jerusalem, and it is not even a type of artichoke. Italian settlers in the United States called the plant girasole, the Italian word for sunflower or, literally, "turning to the sun", obviously because of its bright yellow colour and movement (both plants are in fact members of the genus *Helianthus*). And over time, the name girasole was corrupted to Jerusalem.

The President's Letter should always be about what we have been up to. I'm delighted to say that Valerie's trip to Ansbach to see the Landesausstellung was a huge success in every respect. The thirteen participants had an excellent guide through the exhibition, were treated to a concert rehearsal in the Gumbertus church, strolled through the old town in wonderful weather and ate well. What more can one ask for? Well done, Valerie, and many thanks.

Our efforts to promote enthusiasm for our Happy Hiking Boots activities have recently been slightly frustrated by rainy weather. In late September we set out for the Schwarzschlucht near Feucht and enjoyed a lovely walk along the gorge, but on the way back along the Old Canal the heavens opened, and we all got rather damp. Still, it was an attractive hike. The next one (see the Happy Hiking Boots announcement) will take place on November 12th. Further information can also be found in the article on Aspects of Franconia.

Teresa found a new restaurant for everyone in Spardorf and the food was Asian and extremely good. And on October 15th we gathered in the Thalmühle, a converted water-pumping station that in 1704 was used for fountains and other water displays in the Schlossgarten. And now it is a fine restaurant serving German dishes. Thank you, Teresa.

After British and Irish literature, it was the turn of America and our American members (Becky, Teresa, Carl and George) to entertain and inform us on October 7th. The Turnerbund's restaurant, like so many these days, is clearly having problems finding enough staff and some of us had to wait an exceptionally long time to be served. And when the food did finally come, the "noise" when it was served was very distracting for both audience and speakers. Bridget and I raised the matter with the management, and we just hope that things will improve.

We have already arranged our society's programme until April of the coming year. The next Stammtisch will be on the late Queen Elizabeth, and we hope that some of our own members will contribute with personal reflexions and memories. In the new year we have a Quiz and Games evening to look forward to, another entertaining evening with Dr. Haberkamm, and an evening with our own "Zeitzeugen" looking back on major events in their lives. Bridget has also offered to give a talk on the Globe Theatre in London, which she knows well.

We are also considering an outing in the early part of the year, and I hope another walk can be organized.

Allow me to mention that owing to covid regulations we won't be able to have our traditional Christmas Potluck party this year, but our December Stammtisch evening will have a distinctly Christmas feel to it with songs and readings and a quiz.

Something else worth mentioning is that after consultation with the Finanzamt our next AGM will be in April 2023 (without elections). The 2024 AGM will have elections.

Let me close with the wish that the final weeks of 2022 will be mild and peaceful, mild because heating homes is becoming ever more expensive, and peaceful because too much blood has been spilt on our continent already this year. Is that really too much to wish for?

Of course, it will soon be Christmas, so if we don't see each other again before the end of December take care and stay cheerful and have a wonderful, relaxing time.

Frank Gillard