

September 2022

Dear Franconians,

Autumnal greetings to you all, though, as I write this, it is over 30 degrees and there's not a raincloud in sight. I came back from my daughter's (covid-postponed) wedding celebrations in Cambridge to a straw-coloured garden gasping for water. My guess is that all of you have the same tale to tell. I also managed to catch covid (as did Karen) at the wedding party, but, thanks to my boosters and whatever, I had a very uncomplicated encounter with this modern form of the plague. For me, fortunately, it was more like a day or two of tiredness and a touch of fever, which was cured by a few hours of extra sleep and a couple of ibuprofens. And now I can say that I've joined the club and, for a while at least, I feel especially well protected.

And what has been happening within the Franconian Society over the past few weeks?

On 11th July we showed our appreciation to our two long-standing and former committee members with a lovely meal at an Indian restaurant in Erlangen. I'm talking about Günter Strattner and Christoph Hellwig and their respective wives. Together with the Board there were several committee members present including Becky, Teresa, and Yvonne. Günter was for many years our very important treasurer and Christoph organized a number of walks for the society, and even made a "sneeze guard" for our cake stand at the *Erlanger Frühling*.

Before that, there was the well-attended excursion to Schillingsfürst and its palace, which took place on a very hot day in June. The trip started with a visit to the town's unique and ingenious ox-driven water pump, which was constructed in 1702. One ox walking at a steady pace, slightly uphill so to speak, could raise about 40 litres of water in one minute, and this could then flow through wooden pipes to the nearby palace.

After a good lunch under the shady trees on the terrace, we proceeded to the palace which still belongs to the princes of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst. It's an impressive Baroque building largely completed in the early part of the 18th century, though a lack of money led to much of the interior remaining unfinished until somewhat later. And after our visit to the palace, we sat and watched the falconry display featuring owls and a variety of well-trained birds of prey. And then homeward we went. Incidentally, this was Christian Severin's last trip with the society, he passed away in July, an excursion, which I've been told, he much enjoyed. Finally, my thanks go again to Renate O'Brien, a native of Schillingsfürst, who, with her insider knowledge, gave me a helping hand with the slightly complicated planning.

Our next excursion will be to Ansbach and will focus on the "Landesausstellung" entitled "Typisch Franken?". Valerie is organizing it and is looking at a date at the end of September or early October. She might even include a guided tour through the town, which is always worth a visit.

I understand that our combined Stammtisch evening and Dinner Club, which took place in the garden of La Stella in the Rathsberger Straße in August, attracted a decent number of people, 22 in all. There were, as ever, lively conversations and the weather was appropriate. Unfortunately, it wasn't as kind at the previous Stammtisch at the beginning of July, when rain was forecast, and we had to sit inside at the Turnerbund and only 17 good souls appeared.

If we are lucky and the infection rate remains relatively low, we can look forward to a walk or two in September and October as well as another dinner club evening. And our indoor Stammtisch evenings should get back to greater normality as of this coming month. I've offered to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the British artist Turner and the prize named after him, as well as a walk along the famous Schwarzschlucht (gorge) in Schwarzenbruck, Nuremberg on Sunday, September 18th,

beginning at 1pm. Our starting point will be the Waldschänke, Bruchkanal 3, 90537 Feucht. More information will be posted in early September.

Before I close, let me express our admiration to Mike Gibson, a regular contributor to the Newsletter, for his efforts to raise money for Ukrainians now living in Höchststadt. He has written two booklets to help children learn English more easily and, as far as I am aware, has already achieved his monetary targets. I am sure, however, that Mike will be writing more material in the near future, and we wish him every success in this worthwhile endeavour.

And to close on a botanical note – it's becoming a tradition – I leave you with a flower. It is the fuchsia, discovered by Charles Plumier (1646-1704), a French monk and botanist, but named in honour of the German botanist Leonhart Fuchs (1501–1566), who worked for many years in Ansbach (our autumn trip will be going there). The plant comes originally from the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and flowers, appropriately, into the autumn. Its shape and colours are both beautiful and cheerful. Enjoy.



Frank Gillard