

*Dear Franconians,*

I have a feeling that the weather has been wetter than usual, which is normally great news for farmers and growers, but for others it's all been a bit too damp underfoot. What I mean is that "a tad more sunshine" would cheer us all up. I had a lot of sunshine in February, of course, when my wife and I spent four fascinating weeks in northern India. Bridget very kindly took over from me at this time, writing the President's Letter which kept you all well informed about the Society's various activities at the beginning of the year. While we were enjoying an early summer in Rajasthan, Bavaria was basking in chillier temperatures, so let's hope that with May the weather will improve, and we'll be able to enjoy the cherry blossom which we so much enjoy in Franconia. In fact, I have organised a walk around Kalchreuth for 7<sup>th</sup> May, which, I fear, is pushing my luck a little. We might be too late for the best of the blossom, but the Kalchreuth landscape is delightful anyway, and, if we're lucky, we can have a quick peek inside the interesting Kalchreuth church.



*St Martin, a familiar figure,  
especially in Franconia.*

*St Martin, a familiar figure,*



*A cherry orchard*

*near Kalchreuth...*

*Did you know that it was monks from the monastery at Weißenhohe near Gräfenberg who introduced cherry trees to Franconia roughly one thousand years ago?*

Another walk I would like to take you on is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> June. We'll walk along the river Pegnitz as it makes its way under numerous bridges in the Old City of Nuremberg. By then it will definitely be summer.

The April Stammtisch was when we held our AGM at the Turnerbund (14<sup>th</sup> April). It was a relatively long session, but Bridget's bazaar was definitely a highlight that everyone seemed to enjoy. She told me at the end of the evening how high the proceeds had been, some €400, so well done to her for organising everything. We talked at the AGM about the need to raise our fees by a small amount. I would like to point out again that without the income from the handicrafts group and other activities, like Bridget's bazaar, we certainly wouldn't have the resources to keep up our donations to various charities. In the last year we have given money to, among others, those suffering as a result of the continuing war in Ukraine, the victims of the dreadful earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, and to the organisation known as NOMA Parmed e.V., which helps to combat a terrible childhood disease in parts of Africa, the direct result of malnutrition.

Our AGM discussed a number of issues including our membership worries. One result was that an overwhelming decision was made to increase our fees by 10€ across the board, as from the financial year 2024-25. Secondly, to reduce our postal expenses, our statutes will be changed so that the invitation to our AGM can be sent out by email. Our Newsletter will in future also be sent out electronically. You'll all be delighted at the wonderful pictures it will contain

that until now have only appeared in black and white. And they will be bigger, too!

Our next Stammtisch, which I know will be well attended, will be about the reconstructed Globe Theatre on the south bank of the Thames. Bridget, who grew up in London, knows the story of this wonderful addition to London's cultural landscape extremely well and in a sense her talk can be seen as a continuation of our theme of "witnesses to history".

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Valerie invited those at the Stammtisch to take a walk down Memory Lane, reflecting first on the value of reminiscing in this way. (Her introduction has been included in this Newsletter.) The focus of her talk was the 1950s, that decade between the upheaval of World War II and the colour TV vision of the Swinging Sixties, when fundamental changes occurred to our way of life, economically, socially and culturally. To close the evening there was a short discussion in small groups and a singalong of Fifties' pop songs led by Horst and Sheila Gutknecht, which contributed to the success of the evening.

At the end of March, a smallish group of Franconians went on a "first trip of the year" to the Bible Museum in Nuremberg. It is such a pity that so few people could come because, largely thanks to our very knowledgeable guide, we enjoyed a very informative tour of this, relatively recent, addition to Nuremberg's cultural landscape. Thank you, Carl, for organising this event. It was much appreciated.

Our active Dinner "Clubberer" enjoyed their visit in mid-March to a new Indian restaurant called "Le Bar", and on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> May, they will be meeting for an Asian meal at the popular "My Hao" restaurant in the Karl Zuckerstr.18 in Erlangen. Thank you, Teresa, for managing these events.

To close, let me raise a glass to a corona-free summer and, with you all, breathe a long sigh of relief. It's been a most difficult period, thanks to covid probably the most difficult period, in our long history. 40 years as of 2024 will give us lots to celebrate.

Frank