

## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

Greetings to you all and every good wish for the New Year. May it be as anxiety-free as reasonably possible, and as rewarding as we allow it to be. There is, after all, so much to be grateful for. Many of us live in warm homes well stocked with provisions, surrounded by friends eager to lend a helping hand should the need arise, by family anxious for our well-being, by acquaintances ready at hand with advice and encouragement.

In turn, we ourselves all have friends and family and acquaintances we need to think of and reach out to, which leads me to a fairly obvious thought: if we're looking for a New Year's resolution, we need think no further.

It wasn't that long ago that we in Franconia were enjoying some very pleasant weather and for once the "Happy Hiking Boots" group was able to wander around the Dutzendteich area without umbrellas. Of several things that struck me that day was, for one, how few of the group were familiar with this easily accessible part of Nuremberg. And, for another, how much local and world history the Dutzendteich can reveal if the right questions are asked. At the moment so much is being added and restored (the party rally grounds, the Documentation Centre) that a further visit in two years' time will be necessary. I hope the walking group will grow in the years ahead and that other members of our society will step forward to lead and give advice.

Our handicrafts group is also quite small, but, wow, does it pack a punch. The members meet on a regular basis and quietly produce wonderfully designed and crafted objects that can be bought at our November Stammtisch evening or indeed online from our dedicated website page. I am truly amazed at the skills these ladies have at their fingertips (I think the group is still waiting for the first male member to join in), and it is really thanks to them that so much money is earned every year, especially in the festive season, all of which goes to the charities we support. Congratulations to you all.

The "Dinner Club" is also flourishing, and Teresa does a very good job liaising with a wide variety of restaurants offering local and international cuisines. If you want to know more about what's on the "menu", my advice would be that you contact Teresa directly. She'd be delighted to hear from you.

Our November Stammtisch evening, carefully organized by Valerie, was dedicated to the late Queen and several members came forward with tributes to the service she has given Britain over many decades. We heard from Valerie, Bridget, Yvonne, and Eileen. In December we had our Christmas gathering largely organized by Teresa. The weather wasn't wholly conducive to such an event and wasn't the best attended, as many are still wary of covid and its consequences. We enjoyed a quiz in traditional fashion (written by Yvonne), and a merry singalong with Becky kindly tinkling the ivories. Gwen lent us her beautiful operatic voice to backdrop the festive mood while Bridget gave a meditation on Christmas. Well done to you all!

Our 2023 programme is taking shape, starting with another tradition, namely a Card and Games Evening. These are the dark days of early January when the weather is horribly unpredictable, making this kind of evening a perfect stocking filler until we can start inviting guest speakers and the like.

Don't forget that our AGM will be taking place in April, the exact date has still to be decided. The intention is that we get back to pre-covid days with a spring AGM as is prescribed in our statutes. So please come along and participate in the important evening.

Now, as I reach the end, let me say a huge thank you again to all our committee members and, of course, to our board (Bridget, Valerie, and myself - no, I really shouldn't be thanking myself) for their splendid work and support. And to all of you let me wish you a healthy and happy New Year.

And to conclude, not with a flower this time but a bird with a fine voice. Let me remind you that there are robins and robins. They are seen on Christmas cards everywhere, particularly in the US and the UK. However, they come in two varieties. Which one is this, I wonder.



Frank