

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

July 2023

Dear Franconians,

What a wonderful summer it has so far been. Day after day of sunshine and bearable temperatures, ideal for walks in the country or strolls through the town. On May 7th the Happy Hiking Boots group said a final farewell to the cherry blossom in the orchards around Kalchreuth and on June 11th twelve of us gathered to look at some of the bridges over the Pegnitz and found ourselves sitting outside the Heiliggeistspital for a pleasant lunch, before continuing our walk to the “Männerschuld”, a debtors’ prison where in the past we might easily have ended up had we not been able to pay for our meal.

Some of us, sadly not as many as we thought, went on a very pleasant outing by train at the end of June to the Caspar David Friedrich exhibition in Schweinfurt. Valerie organised a wonderful trip which involved a guided tour of the exhibition and an early evening meal close to the river. Caspar David Friedrich is one of the great 19th-century German artists, whose often brooding art epitomizes many of the themes of Romanticism. Here, for example, we sense the haunting, sometimes intimidating grandeur of nature in which man can seem a rather insignificant player.





The Dinner Club continues to thrive. There was a May outing to the popular Vietnamese restaurant “My Hao” in the Karl Zuckerstrasse, where the ten present enjoyed a very convivial evening. During the Bergkirchweih in June Teresa also organised the traditional gathering at “Fleischman’s Garten” on the Berg, which, I’m told, was also a success. Ten people came along.

Early May found us returning to our classic Stammtisch evening with lecture, so sorely missed after months of lockdown and extreme caution. This time we were treated to an extremely well-prepared talk on Shakespeare’s Globe theatre given by our Vice-President Bridget. Bridget, of course, hails from London and attended one of its best schools, a stone’s throw from some of the bard’s favourite stomping grounds. Growing up so close to where the original Globe once stood must have been inspiring. The story goes that in 1949, the new

Globe Theatre's founder, Sam Wanamaker, visited London with a mission to find the site of the original Globe, and was surprised to find only a small plaque commemorating the site (which got some details wrong!). An ambitious man, he set out in 1970 to build a reconstruction of Shakespeare's original Globe on Bankside. He founded the Shakespeare Globe Trust in 1971 with a mission to recreate the 1599 amphitheatre as accurately as he possibly could. Sadly, he was to pass away before the new theatre was completed in 1997. It was in those early years that Bridget visited the New Globe with her middle daughter, Joanna, and was fascinated by what she saw and experienced. And moreover, mother and daughter were able to gain a powerful insight into the workings of the theatre thanks to their contacts with those involved in this groundbreaking project, and it was this palpable excitement which she conveyed to her audience at the Franconian Society. If you couldn't be there in May, do come along when she continues the "Globe" story at one of our future Stammtisches! It's a must.

So you see that we are quickly returning to normal, have already done so indeed, with outings, dinner club gatherings, walks and talks. Time to move on. Although our next Annual General Meeting is still far in the future, this gives me an opportunity to announce that I have decided not to stand next year for re-election as President. The reasons should be obvious. I am well into my seventies already and simply don't have the energy and oomph any longer that the job demands. Apart from that, of course, my daughter and her partner are expecting their first child this autumn, and I owe it to the family (including my sister and her husband, both over eighty) to have the time to visit on a more frequent basis. Asking our two excellent Vice-Presidents to stand in for me temporarily and at short notice is simply not kosher, or indeed fair on them. I'm sure you understand. I've had a good, long run as President, but I think it is really time now to bow out gracefully, while I still can! So, there's something for all of us to ponder in the months ahead. A new President is needed!!! Especially important as next year we will be celebrating our fortieth anniversary. I think some contenders are pretty obvious, some may still want to come forward with new ideas. All very exciting.

So dear friends, please enjoy the rest of the summer, stay safe and may the early autumn prove to be the blessing we richly deserve. And don't forget to consult our calendar to see when our next walk will be, or our next trip with the Dinner Club. I can already tell you about the former: **Meeting point at one o'clock at the Gasthof zur Linde Effeltrich on Saturday 29th July and from there to Hetzles and back** (there and back about one hour). Please don't forget to register with me (email or by telephone) by 27th July. Looking forward to seeing you.

Frank Gillard