

Dear Franconians,

The first time I wrote the Vice President's Letter was in July 2105, when Frank was enjoying a seven-week stay in China. The next time – in the summer of 2017 – Frank and his wife were in America, visiting family and friends and celebrating their round birthdays. And this time they have been in India for nearly a month, mainly touring Rajasthan. By all accounts, it has been a memorable trip and we will look forward to hearing Frank talk about his varied and interesting impressions of this part of northern India later on this year.

Interesting, varied and entertaining are the goals the Board and Committee have in mind when they meet to plan the Franconian Society programme each year. Let me whet your appetite by giving you some examples of events from our programme for 2023.

Looking back, we had two entertaining Stammtisch evenings to start the year. In January, Becky and Yvonne treated us to an evening of popular board and word games, while in February, we were challenged by one of Yvonne's much-loved pub quizzes, with questions ranging from general knowledge through art and literature to music. A great deal of fun was had at these two events and our sincere thanks go to both Becky and Yvonne for the time and trouble they took to organize these evenings. Likewise, Teresa organized two Dinner Club events: in January at Gaststätte Römning, which offers Bohemian cuisine, and in February at Gasthaus Schreyer, where our members enjoyed Greek cooking. A huge thank you to you, Teresa, for making our Dinner Club evenings so successful.

And what can we look forward to in 2023? In addition to Frank's talk on Rajasthan, there will be the first talk or interview in the series 'Witnesses to History', given by some of our members and organized by Valerie. We have also invited Dr Haberkamm again to talk on an aspect of the Franconian Dialect and I will give a talk on 'The Rebuilding of Shakespeare's Globe in London: an exciting and innovative theatre project.' Dinner Club evenings will be at restaurants offering Indian and Vietnamese food, on the Berg or - in the summer months - at the Dechsendorfer Forsthaus or in a local beer garden. Walks led by Frank, Andrew or Mairi have so far been planned along the Pegnitz, through the Aischgrund and to the Kosbacher Altar, while the first day trip this year, organized by Carl, is to Nuremberg to visit the Bible Museum and have a closer look at the art treasures in the Lorenzkirche. And, last but not least, we will honour our charity commitments by organizing a booksale at each of our 'Under the Oak Tree' summer meetings, there will be another Christmas bazaar organized by our handicrafts group and, in the autumn, there will be a 'Talent evening for the Ukraine', where several of our members will perform to raise money for those caught up in a country embroiled in a bitter war.

Let me just quickly remind you of our AGM, which is coming up on 14th April and which will replace the April Stammtisch. Watch out for the invitation to this event, which you will find in your letter boxes in mid-March. This is not an election year for the Board and Committee, but there are a number of topics we would like to discuss with you as Franconian Society members and so we hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend the AGM. Make a note of the date in your diaries now!

So the Franconian Society year has started well, there is an exciting, interesting and varied programme ahead of us and, as we gradually move into spring, we hope to see an increasing number of you at our events. Do keep an eye on our online calendar and look out for the announcement of our events in our Newsletters, so that you don't miss any of them! By the time the next Newsletter comes out in May, spring will be well and truly with us, Easter will be over and so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and joyful Easter. But for now, let me leave you with a quotation and a picture which describe so aptly the promise contained within the cold days of early March of warmer and lighter days to come:

Take care,
Bridget Ineichen,
1st Vice President

