

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

*The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.*

*Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die, too,
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.*

*Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In full-grown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.*

This poem by the 20th-century English poet, Philip Larkin, and entitled “The Trees”, is one of his most beautiful pieces of poetry, as it touches, amongst others, on what we experience every year: the long bleak spell of winter when Nature seems to fade and die, indicating that the old year is now over. After a period of complete rest, Nature slowly starts to come to life again in the following spring, when flowers begin to push through the earth and bloom in myriad colours, buds on the trees open into fragile blossom and green foliage gradually covers the branches of the trees, symbolizing that fresh beginnings are possible and that they, in turn, could lead to fresh hope that things will change for the better. Let us hope that this will be the case for the many crisis areas in our world today.

I hope you have all been able to enjoy the various facets of this year's beautifully warm and sunny spring and that the Easter period was a happy one for you all. Since writing my last President's Letter to you, the Franconian Society year April 2024 to March 2025 has ended and a new one has started. It was especially nice to see a considerable number of you at our various Franconian Society events in March and April this year. In March, Frau Dr Dorothea Hobeck, founder of the Tigerauge Initiative Kinderhospiz Nordbayern e.V. came to tell us about the work done by this organization.

This part of the evening had a format which was different from usual, as Dr Hobeck didn't give us a talk as such, but sitting together with us in a circle encouraged us to ask questions about the work done by this mobile children's hospice organisation, to discuss with her the aims and the necessity of such a project and to put forward ideas for related projects. The conversation ball rolled so easily, with almost everyone contributing, that an hour and a half passed unnoticed. The evening was considered to be such a success that we will try this format again – at the latest when Professor Gossel comes to discuss with us the results of the mid-term elections in America in November, 2026.

April was the month in which our Annual General Meeting took place. The AGM was divided into two parts, the first part being taken up with reviewing the Franconian Society year April 2024 to March 2025 and outlining future events for the coming year. This was done through reports given by members of the Board and Committee who are responsible for the varied activities the Franconian Society has to offer: Dinner Club events, Teresa; the Handicrafts Group, Uschi;



outings and trips, Valerie; Stammtisch Evening talks and events, Bridget; walks, Frank. The second part of the AGM gave members the opportunity to discuss and decide on two proposals which had been put forward by some of our members: the Christmas Potluck, where, after a trial Potluck lunch last year, the vote went in favour of returning to an evening event, and about the distribution of the Newsletter, where members voted to continue its distribution electronically, with the pictures in colour, while those without a computer would continue to receive it by post, but with the pictures in black and white. There was also a brief discussion about the challenges which might face our Society in the years to come, and suggestions were put forward as to how to deal with these. But that topic is for another President's Letter!



A decision to combine a Dinner Club event with a walk was introduced as a novum in April and was well received by our members. After an evening Dinner Club in March, April saw a joint event of lunch in the Stadtpark Cafe in Fürth, organized by Teresa, followed by a walk with Frank through the Stadtpark to enjoy the many flowers which were in bloom there. My thanks to both Teresa and Frank for organizing such a pleasant event for our members – and for those of you who were unable to attend this time round, the next similar event will be this coming August in a restaurant in Zirndorf, combined with a walk around the town.

courtesy of Frank Gillard

On the last and very sunny Wednesday in April, a group of us went to Bamberg to see the interesting exhibition "1,000 Years Ago" – an exhibition on the life and times of Emperor Heinrich II and his wife Kunigunde. This was followed by a visit to the rose garden with its magnificent view over the old town, and to the ancient cathedral, where a beautiful picture of Pope Francis, who died on Easter Monday, was on display, giving people the opportunity to pause and reflect on his life's work. Supper in an excellent Bamberg restaurant rounded off what was a perfect outing. Many thanks, Valerie, for organizing something which was appreciated and enjoyed by everyone.

And so now all it remains for me to do is to wish you all the best for the weeks ahead. Please don't forget to look at the Franconian Society calendar in this Newsletter for upcoming events in May to July, at which we hope to see as many of you as possible. **Take care,**
Bridget Ineichen



courtesy of Eileen Rettner