



# KONTAKT



**WELCOME TO THE 2019 / 2020 EDITION OF KONTAKT!**

**Elizabeth Scannell, Chairman**



***Our Human Fruit Machine in action – everyone a winner!***

The highlight of 2019 was our visit to Roth in August, to meet old friends and make new ones. As usual we were splendidly entertained and, to give a flavour of what we experienced to those who did not come to Germany, we are printing the list of events provided by our hosts, our take on them and stories of what we did in our free time in Roth and beyond

From now until August 2020, we must concentrate on planning for the next visit from Roth. Our guests will be arriving for the August Bank Holiday weekend which gives many opportunities and some challenges. As Chairman, I would urge all our members to come to our fund raising events and to bring a friend or two along. I welcome feedback and ideas about fundraising activities and outings for our guests.

In 2019 we have enjoyed our annual New Year's Dinner, a Garden Party in May and our Strawberry Tea in June.

Since we returned from Roth, we have had a successful coffee morning and a super successful Bierfest, thanks to much planning and hard work on the part of Jon Coke and Noelle Hones. The event had an excellent write up in the Brentwood Gazette. On 1<sup>st</sup> December we enjoyed a Stollen

and coffee afternoon hosted by Jane and Roger Winter which was a great start to the Christmas festivities. Many thanks to the kind hosts and all who brought along delicious cakes and biscuits.

I especially look forward to meeting you all at the annual Dinner in January.

Throughout the year, we have been working hard to bring the Association to a wider audience and to attract new members. To help achieve this, we have printed a brochure for the first time. It is now on display in our libraries and social hubs such as the notice boards in Sainsbury's and Wilco. We have run a 'human fruit machine' stall jointly with the French Town Twinning Association at four local schools' Christmas Fetes. Every child was a winner and we were able to engage with their parents. It was hard work but fun and I thank Diane Matthews for her drive and enthusiasm in setting up the events. We distributed nearly 100 brochures at each fete.

In 2019, two free local magazines, 'Enjoy Brentwood More!' and the Brentwood/Ongar edition of 'Vision' have printed full, illustrated articles about the Organisation.

Sadly, I must report that since our AGM two eminent former members of the Association, Shirley Howe and Robin Staines have passed away. We send our deepest sympathy to their loved ones.

We hope you enjoy this magazine, the work of many hands and I heartily thank all the contributors and my joint editors, namely Diane Matthews and Judy Withyman.

I wish you all the very best for the New Year and a guten Rutch ! to our German friends.

## **Some snapshots of last year's events**

### **Garden Party in May**



***Playing Coarse Croquet***



***Beverley & Keith strolling in the garden***

## Oktoberfest



*Jon having a break*



*Elizabeth and Diane selling Strudel*



*A satisfied customer*



*Noelle cooking sausages*

*Photographs by Wendy Pike*

## Enjoying the Winters' Hospitality in December



## **VISIT TO ROTH: 29TH AUGUST TO 3RD SEPTEMBER**

**40 Years of partnership**

**Programme for the official visit to the administrative district Roth**

### **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

#### **Journey of the guests**

- 2 pm Departure at the district administration Roth to pick up the guests
- 4 pm Arrival of the guests at the airport in Munich  
(flight number EZY 3071)
- ca 6pm Arrival of the guests at the administration district Roth

### **Friday 30th August 2019**

#### **Day trip in the district of Roth**

- 10 am Official welcome of the Brentwood Guests in the administration district Roth (conference hall) by Mr Herbert Eckstein, administrative head of the district.
- 12 pm – 1.30 pm Guided tour of Ratibor castle (bilingual)
- 5 pm Guided tour of Pyraser Country Brewery (bilingual)

### **Saturday 31st August 2019**

#### **Day trip to Regensburg**

- 9 am Bus ride from administration district Roth to Regensburg
- 11.30 am Guided tour of the city
- 1 pm Lunchtime – Gasthaus Weißbrauhaus
- 4 pm 'Swirl ride' – (ca 45 – 50 min)
- 5.30 pm Departure to Roth
- ca 7 pm Arrival at the administration district Roth

## **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019**

- Rest of the day at free disposal -

## **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019**

### **Visit to a market town (market town Wendelstein)**

- 10 am            Presentation of the market town Wendelstein by the first mayor,  
Werner Langhans
- 11 am            Guided tour of the old town  
Group lunch
- 6.30 pm        German-English evening of friendship at AWO-Auf Draht!  
(Bortenmacherstraße 6, 91154 Roth)

## **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019**

### **Honourable discharge and return journey**

- 9 am            Departure from the administration district Roth to Munich (with  
luggage)
- 10.30 am       Sightseeing castle Schleißheim
- ca 1.30 pm     Ride to the airport
- 4.30 pm        Return flight of the guest to England  
(flight number EZY 3072)

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August**

**Visit to Castle Ratibor by Tony Sleep**



***Photo of the Great Hall by  
Manfred Klier***

After a warm welcome by the Landrat Herbert Eckstein we enjoyed a presentation showing modern day Roth, given in excellent English by two young presenters.

This was followed by a visit to Castle Ratibor which is in the centre of the Old Town. Standing in the courtyard of Schloss Ratibor we were told about the history of the castle, which was originally built in 1535 by the Margrave of Brandenburg and Ansbach, Georg, as a hunting lodge due to the abundance of game in the area.

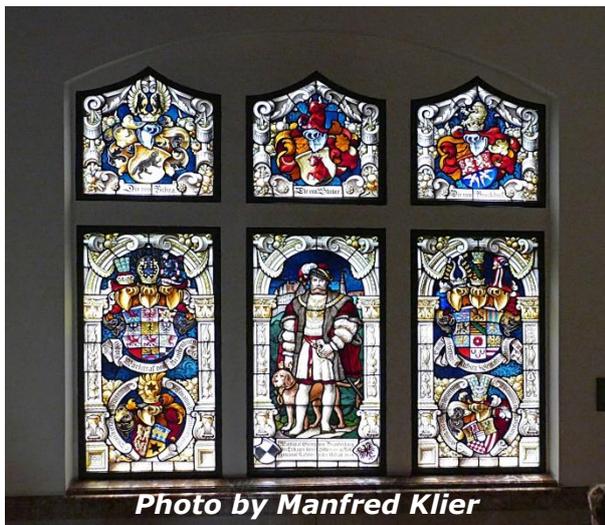
Georg, known as the "Pious", built the castle from revenues he raised in his home area of the Silesian Principality of Ratibor and Oppeln, therefore he called it Ratibor Castle.

We entered the castle through a door leading into the magnificent sandstone stairwell and up a Renaissance style marble staircase where we stopped to hear the story of Margrave Georg, who was portrayed with



***Photo by Diane Matthews***

heraldic signs and his three wives on the stained glass window half way up the staircase.



The picture of Georg reminded us of Henry VIII who was on the throne of England at this time. At the top of the staircase we turned into the Fireplace Room, through into the Music Room and on into the Baroque Room, all of which were in original classical style with many paintings dating back to the late 18th century. In the gallery we saw slightly later paintings by Anton Seitz who was born in Roth in 1829. Returning to the top of the

staircase we went through into the dining room via the Conservatory. The dining hall is in the style of the Nuremburg Renaissance, with one enormous painting above the fireplace showing a banquet at the house of the family Steiber with all the guests dressed in their finest garments.

Finally, we entered the magnificent Ceremonial Hall reminiscent of Italian halls of the late Renaissance period ornamented with huge paintings on the stucco ceiling. The central painting depicts the Triumph of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty and procreation. On the walls there were other scenes of Greek mythology. Suddenly our guide threw a single switch to light up the two impressive crystal chandeliers containing well over one hundred light bulbs, which highlighted the wonderful wooden inlaid floor.

In 1942 the widow of the last Margrave, Wilhelm von Steiber, Minna, donated Castle Ratibor as a gift to the town of Roth. This was originally accepted with mixed feelings due to the cost of maintaining such a magnificent building. Through time, the citizens of Roth have happily accepted this philanthropic gesture and many brides have since graced the Ceremonial Hall and its splendid surroundings for their civic weddings.

I am grateful to my kind host and professional photographer and journalist, Manfred Klier, for the excellent photos which accompany this article.

## Visit to the Pyraser Brauerei by Jon Cloke

We visited the Pyraser Brauerei which is twinned with the Brentwood Brewery on the evening of Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August

The TT group managed to get way behind the scenes into the brewery proper where we were taken through the whole procedure of making their beer to RheinHeitsGebot standard (only Malted grain, Water, Yeast and Hops). This dates back to Roman times, but is still enforced; so they have none of the hangover additives used in the UK!

After that we were treated to 250ml of cold beer each and given a run down on the number of and different beers Pyraser manufacture.

We then moved through to the cold filtration and bottling plants. Fortunately the bottling plant was not running at the time we visited, else we would all have come out deaf!

We weren't allowed into the warehouse area, as there have been unexplained losses in the past (who me?), but were then conducted through to a traditional German evening repast; lots of meat and cheese , pickles and bread together with a help yourself free bar, which was unfortunately a bit lively. In spite of that we all enjoyed several different Pyraser brews and a good night was had by all.



**Saturday 31st August**

**Mystery of the Regensburg Swirl Ride by John Saxton**

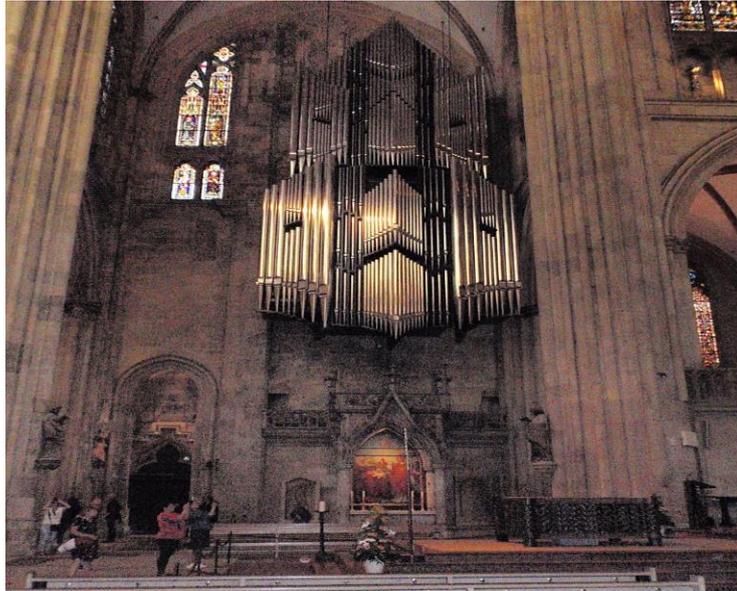


**French Guide Tells Legend of Bridge**

With many of our hosts we spent Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August in Regensburg, which is deservedly one of the 1,121 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. (Germany has 46 (UK 31))

A settlement since the Stone Age, Regensburg's fortunes were boosted by the stone bridge across the Danube, built 1135-46. A most personable French guide explained to our German speaking group that the bridge's builder recruited the Devil to help him finish the job before the cathedral was completed in order to win his bet with the holy building's creator. Old Nick obliged on condition that he have the souls of the first "eight feet" to cross. The sneaky civil engineer drove a dog, a cockerel and a hen across the new structure. Enraged, Beelzebub turned destructive vandal but managed only to introduce a bend in the bridge, still visible. The discomfited cathedral builder subsequently leapt to his death from the unfinished fruit of his labour.

Wealthy merchants literally kept up with the Joneses; their imposing dwellings, still standing proud in the beautiful Old Town, sport the tallest towers their bragging owners could afford as mediaeval status symbols.



### **All those Organ Pipes Suspended from the Roof!**

Attending services in the beautiful cathedral demands strong faith in very strong chains suspending the organ pipes at a rather threatening height above the congregation.

There is civic pride vested in the elegant Danube day cruiser, Motor Vessel Regensburg. On 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1985 on board that ship whilst anchored in the small Luxembourg town of Schengen, ambassadors of Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Holland and the Federal republic of Germany signed the agreement to gradually do away with border controls on people between their countries, which has now spread to include many more countries. A city council document expressed the aspiration that all European borders might disappear – Europe has, from (painful) experience, learnt the lesson.

.....and the Swirl Ride mystery? We were relieved to discover it was an extravagant translation of the word "Strudel", which can mean swirl but actually referred to the eddies and whirlpools visible in the fast flowing Danube from the ship we all took a trip on (Swirl Ride) after lunching together in the excellent Gasthaus Weißbräuhaus.

## Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September

### Visit to Wendelstein by Anne Long

It was a lovely summer morning when our hosts, Manfred and Heidi-Marie Trankler drove us through beautiful countryside to Wendelstein, another little town in Landkreis Roth which is situated 1.3 kilometers from Nuremberg.



We arrived at the new Town Hall, which was very modern and impressive, where we were met by the Burgermeister of Wendelstein, Herr Werner Langans, who gave us an interesting introduction to his lovely town. He explained the ancient meaning of the name 'Wendelstein'.... A very large tall white rock in the middle of the town which the river had to bend and flow around.

After drinks and biscuits, we set out with a guide who walked us through centuries old, well preserved cobbled streets. We passed buildings dating back to the early middle ages. We saw the ancient half-timbered building formerly the town

school now used as the library, the old Town Hall, the former communal laundry pool and the market place, where stands the statue of a warlike Wend, from the tribe who allegedly founded the town (see photo above).

Finally, we visited the Protestant Church St. George of Wendelstein, which contained a most beautiful carved and painted Altarpiece, supposedly created by Albrecht Durer.

Our tour ended in a large local restaurant, where we were treated to a wonderful lunch and especially had the pleasure of the company of our generous host, the Burgermeister.



*Photo by Manfred Klier*

## Farewell Evening by Christine Minns

Our last get-together, as always, was the farewell Freundschaft evening, a convivial gathering with our German friends, which this year pulled out all the stops in celebration of 40 years of twinning with Brentwood. It was held in the town of Roth and was very well attended by hosts past and present, and other guests. The hall was full.

Much planning had gone into, not only the extensive buffet serving hot and cold dishes, but the whole evening, which included a programme of entertainment.

The first part of the evening featured a slide show reflecting the past forty years. There was also an address by the Landrat, Herbert Eckstein, and by Anne Klier, Chairman of the Freundkreis committee.

This was followed by a show-case of the considerable talent in the Roth district, which began with an accomplished choir. This was followed in succession by a pair of Latin-American dancers in stunning costume, an international cycling gymnast making the audience gasp in awe, and two conjurers who later on also passed amongst the guests at the tables doing tricks.

A very talented recorder orchestra rounded off the evening by playing classical and modern pieces, with audience participation in the finale with Land of Hope and Glory.

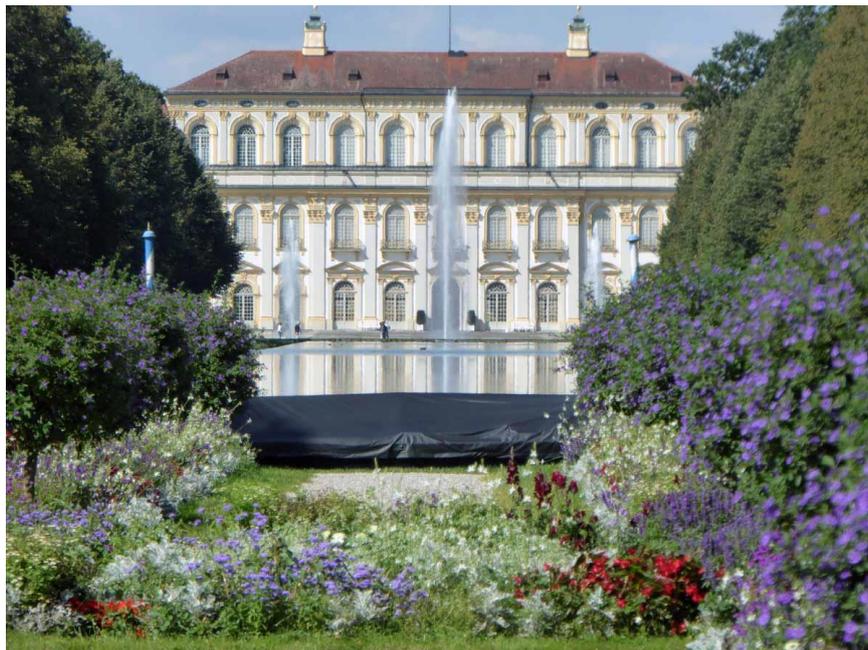


**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September**

**Sightseeing in Schleißheim by Elizabeth Scannell**

We were lucky enough to break our journey home on 3<sup>rd</sup> September with a visit to Schleissheim, situated just outside Munich.

The coach pulled up outside a magnificent Renaissance palace painted bright yellow, stretching away on both sides and looking considerably bigger than Buckingham Palace. Anne Klier told us that this was the New Palace, one of three palaces in the park.



I did not think that I could possibly visit the New Palace in the time allowed, so set off for a smaller building, which proved to be the Old Palace which now houses a most unusual collection of religious artefacts. Many of them were delightful. Scores of cribs from all over the world. 3 foot high Kremlins in sugar pink & blue from former Czechoslovakia, bamboo cribs from China, a giraffe necked Madonna covered in beads from Africa, and rocky villages with hundreds of busy inhabitants from Austria, Italy & Germany. After Christmas came Easter, bunnies, hares & decorated eggs. Then a Corpus Christi procession complete with marching band. The star was an African Noah's ark, with the most lifelike passengers I have ever seen just alighting on Mount Ararat. Crocodiles were waddling down the gang plank, black gorillas walked down on their knuckles, elephants, anteaters warthogs lions & hyenas preceded them, a profusion of animals made out of wood and bark, each pair perfectly captured. How I coveted it!

On the way out I discovered a striking exhibition of woodcuts by Eduard Biscoff (1890-1974 ) depicting the vanished life of farmers & fishermen on the coast of Prussia. How hard it must have been, a constant battle with the wind, the sea and encroaching sand dunes. He depicted barefoot farm workers going out with enormous scythes, fishermen looking out on wild seas for a boat late returning and skinny barefoot children working on the boats. One memorable woodcut depicted a burly old milkman advancing on his cows with a one legged milking stool strapped to his backside.

Coming from there, it was a complete contrast to enjoy the urbanity of the formal baroque gardens which, despite the huge fountains, resembled the interior of the New Palace brought outdoors. So formal and perfect, and strangely empty, but I did see one interloper, a red squirrel.



We could have spent more time at Schleißheim; I did not even find the famous beer-garden, but we had a plane to catch.



## **What did we do in our free time in Roth?**

You might have thought that in the midst of such activity we put our feet up on the free Sunday. Far from it, our generous hosts took us far and wide to see the enormous diversity of activities Franken offers to visitors. So here is:

### **Time on the Danube by Hetty Smith**

Sunday was filled with the sights, sounds and smells of the Bavarian countryside as we spent our free day in the hike trails by the upper Danube. Our journey through the forest was dotted with points of interest : occasional breaks in the trees revealed spectacular river views, perfect for photo opportunities ; caves extended high into the cliffs alongside the trail; even a tiny church was nestled into the crags by the waterfront. Our ascent was made especially worthwhile by the preceding lunch in the grounds of Weltenburg Abbey, where St.George's Chapel is a beautiful if unexpectedly extravagant spot. Loaded up with Schweinesaxe, we were slightly concerned that the little wooden boat we hired couldn't quite hack the journey back down the river, but we were soon distracted by the stunning landscape unfolding across the Danube – the real highlight of the day.

### **Hitting the High Spots- Nuremburg on a Friday Night by Tom Smith**

After enjoying a locally brewed beer and a smorgasbord of various cured meats, cheese and bread, the younger cohort of the town-twinning group decided to head to Nurnberg for an evening of partying.

Our group, consisting of myself, my sister Hetty and our two friends from Landkreis Roth, Henrik and Anna, started the night by "warming up" with a few drinks at Anna's house. We then moved swiftly on to a nightclub in Nurnberg, whose name I can't remember. It had music, atmosphere and a clientele eerily similar to many of the bars and clubs in Brentwood! We grew tired of the DJ's endless stream of hip-hop songs, so decided to switch allegiance to a student run bar known locally as "Die Bombe" (the bomb). Here the atmosphere was similar to what I am used to as a student in England – drunken sweaty youths swaying along to cheesy songs. After ordering several more rounds of drinks and dancing the night away, Anna, Hetty and I decided we would much rather be asleep. Henrik, however, managed to soldier on, visiting (another) club with another group of friends.

I woke up next morning mildly hungover, feeling satisfied with my clubbing experience in Nurnberg.

After that night my suspicions were confirmed – Germans in Roth, much like Brits in Brentwood - really do love a party.

## **Mushroom Hunting by Elizabeth Scannell**

We had planned to visit Archaeopteryx in the Solnhofen Museum. He (or she) is one of only 11 examples yet found of the tiny feathered dinosaurs which are a link between flightless, feathered dinosaurs and birds. But it was a very hot day, and quite a long drive and Heike and I thought that we should go mushroom picking in the pine woods instead. This is not an activity for faint hearted English visitors. Heike's expert eye rapidly found brown toadstools/mushrooms which were good to eat and dismissed my efforts - anything I spotted was either deadly poison or too old. I did, however, find berries which were acceptable, growing on low bushes which she told me belonged to the heather family.

After lunch, son Steffan, who is now an apprentice, visited with his girlfriend, to the great joy of the family and we sat round celebrating with Heike's scrumptious coffee and cakes.

A lazy afternoon and then the mushrooms in cream sauce for supper. Delicious!

## **A visit to the DB Museum in Nuremberg by Peter Watkins**

Sunday morning the 1<sup>st</sup> September saw us heading off to the Museum of Transport and Communications in Nuremberg. Apparently, this is the oldest railway museum in the world and certainly has a remarkable collection of railway engines. I will home in on a few of the exhibits which took my attention.



They have a very well made working replica of the first railway engine in Germany, this is called the "Adler" (Eagle), and was made by George Stephenson and exported to Germany together with a driver. The driver must have enjoyed the Nuremberg sausages and beer so much that he decided to stay! There is a lot

of other railway memorabilia to see, but the two magnificent carriages from the royal train of Ludwig II are likely to be of interest to all the family.

The second floor was devoted to communications; here I spotted a Chinese typewriter! - this had a platen with hundreds of characters on it, and what appeared to be three separate carriages. There was a video alongside



showing a Chinese lady using the typewriter, but even she appeared to be puzzled at times. Although the typewriter seemed beautifully made, I thought this was one case where the computer made life easier.

The third floor was given over to space communications. Here we donned a virtual reality helmet to join the Apollo Mission on a visit to the Moon. Amazing! We were then photographed in our spacesuits, unfortunately, despite the reduced "g" force there was no improvement in our appearance!

## Visit to the Brombachsee by Roger and Jane Winter



We had seen some of the local lakes from a distance on previous visits. We were therefore very pleased by the suggestion of a cruise on the Brombachsee which is about half an hour's drive south from Georgensgmund.

Guenther Heckel drove us there and was surprised to see how much had changed since his previous visit.

The Big Brombachsee is an artificial lake created primarily as a reservoir which makes it possible to top up other lakes and the Rhine / Main / Danube canal.

Planned in the 1970s it was completed in 2000 and has been developed as a leisure area. So there is a hiking and cycle path around the lake, lots of parks with beaches, cafes and restaurants.

As for the lake you can of course go swimming as well as kite surfing, sailing and diving.

The only 'ship' allowed on the lake is the MS Brombachsee a 46mt long vessel with three decks on which you can enjoy the views, eat and drink.

The cruise round the lake takes one and a half hours calling at other landing sites. Being a sunny Sunday the boat was busy and probably close to its 600 capacity, but still a lot of fun.

We were not the only members of the town twinning group aboard.

Back home Irene had prepared a late Sunday lunch of venison, which we followed much later with a walk through the woods in Maebenberg, a fitting end to a lovely day.



## **A Visit to Greiding by Pam Richards**

My whole time this year in Germany was great but our free day out surpassed all expectations. A later breakfast time than usual was much appreciated as we did not need to hurry. Our trip out was to be to Greiding 37.24 km south east of Roth on the river Schwarzach in the Altmuhl valley. The journey through the pretty villages and countryside took about half an hour. The Trachtenmarkt, the traditional costume market, always takes place in the first weekend in September so we were extremely lucky that it coincided with our visit. The entrance fee was 3 Euros (a bargain) with children under 18 free. There were over 90 stalls



selling silk, cotton and linen fabrics and all types of lace, braids and trimmings. Buttons, belts, semi-finished and finished products, dirndls, lederhosen, stockings, shawls and so much more. A large % of the visitors were wearing traditional dress which was delightful to see.

During the day, there was entertainment on a stage which had been erected in front of the Town Hall. There was traditional folk dancing – Schuhplattler - and displays of Bavarian costumes, details of which were explained by the compere. It was interesting to learn that in olden days you could tell whether a lady was a Catholic or a Protestant by her head wear. It was lunch time and the 'Bier Garten' was calling so we found a seat on a wooden bench and quenched our thirst. We were sitting opposite a very interesting man in his lederhosen; on his braces, which had been handed down to him, was a silver brooch with a picture of Ludwig II. He was explaining how expensive the costumes and hats were and, once on their heads, the hats stayed there until they got back home in case they got lost.

In the upper part of the village was a lovely church with an interesting churchyard and scenic views. It was an amazing day out, finished off with supper in the garden accompanied by bats and a very large hornet. Fortunately they kept themselves to themselves.

## **Bagging the hops and a cruise on the Brombachsee by Pauline Myers**

It was a privilege for me this year to be invited to stay with Heidi and Manfred Tränkler as I hadn't been to Germany for a few years and they were wonderful hosts. On the free day, in the morning we visited a farm where the hops had already been collected and in the barn it was a most fascinating sight to see the threshing machinery and conveyer working through all the stages to the final product being bagged ready for the brewery. But that wasn't the only treat that day.

In the afternoon we had a delightful trip on the MS Brombachsee, an impressive trimaran that provided a feeling of being on a cruise on the Great Brombachsee, an enormous reservoir that encourages many leisure activities as well as many other benefits. As we relaxed in comfort we watched the surfers glide by and the lovely scenery. A beautiful sunny enjoyable day.





## FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Your committee is in the course of arranging a fun Quiz night which will take place on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March** at St Peter's Church Hall in Hutton.

**Please keep this date free**

After that we plan to hold a Sponsored Walk, a Garden Party with croquet and a plant sale at 49 Shenfield Road, and our ever popular Strawberry Tea.



Our friends from Roth will arrive on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> August and will depart on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September.

**We hope very much that you will participate in the outings and social events that we are planning for them.**