Dear Member,

Coming to the end of 2018, we are glad to report that our Newsletter is now in its 6th year. We are most grateful to Pauline Crump for editing our quarterly publication for the last two years and we thank her for her valuable contribution to the Anglo Austrian Society.

In 2018 we can look back to a successful year of promoting friendship and understanding between Austria and Great Britain. The Society is a charity that promotes cross-cultural links between the people of the UK and Austria at all levels. We are proud that our grants from the Otto Harpner Fund and the Angela Krosik bequest provided welcome financial assistance to seven applicants this year.

The Society is also a source of information and the Secretariat has provided answers to many enquiries from members and non-members. We are lucky to have Allyson Tinnelly in our High Wycombe office as your first point of contact, who deals with the day to day administration.

In 2019 the Society celebrates 75 years in the UK. It has a proud history with nearly 600 members. Your trustees have worked hard on behalf of the members to put the Society on a sound financial footing and to comply with the ever increasing raft of governance and guidelines produced by the Charity Commission.

Our monthly Stammtisch meetings up and down the country continue to thrive and our thanks go to the organisers of the Southern, Chiltern, Oxford, Wirral and London Stammtische for their efforts on behalf of the Society. If you feel you can get involved and establish a Stammtisch in your area, please contact the office. Just two or three (or more) interested parties can get a Stammtisch on the way, no formalities, just a willingness to meet once a month over a cup of tea, coffee or even lunch. One doesn’t need to be of Austrian nationality or speak German. Not all Stammtisch participants are members of the Society, but we would be very happy for you to join.

With our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy New Year

Yours sincerely

The Editorial Team

A warm Welcome to Ambassador Dr Michael Zimmermann

The new Austrian Ambassador to the UK and Northern Ireland comes with an impressive CV.

He was born in Villach, Carinthia in 1958 and is married with two children. After finishing Vienna University with a Dr iur. in 1981, he attended the Diplomatic Academy and joined the Foreign Service in 1983.

This was followed by postings in Japan, Iran and London in the late 90’s (Austrian Cultural Institute). He became Chief of Cabinet of the Foreign Ministry in 2004.

From 2009 to 2014 he was Austrian Ambassador in Hungary and after that he was Chief of the General Management in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna until 2018.

Fact about the Embassy

In addition to Austria’s embassy in London, Austria has four other representations in the United Kingdom. Consulates are in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Hamilton and Manchester.

The United Kingdom has five representations in Austria including the embassy in Vienna and consulates in Bregenz, Graz, Innsbruck and Salzburg.

Other Austrian News:

The current issue of the study “How’s Austria” – ‘Wie geht’s Österreich’ by Statistics Austria draws a picture of progress and wealth. In 2017 GDP increased by 1.9% per capita in real terms. The subjective life satisfaction remained at a high level, but the gap between low and high annual gross income of employed persons widened. Of the persons interviewed one quality of life indicator that showed negative tendencies was the cost of housing, which now exceeds 40% of household income.

Further information can be obtained from www.statistik.at.
“Stille Nacht” – Silent Night 1818 – 2018

At Oberndorf, 15 km north of Salzburg, Franz Xaver Gruber’s melody to words from Joseph Mohr was sung for the first time at midnight mass Christmas 1818. It has travelled far since then and is sung in a multitude of languages all over the world. The circumstances of the carol’s composition is surrounded by legend. As elsewhere so also in Oberndorf, a small village on the banks of the river Salzach, people were preparing for Christmas festivities on December 24th 1818. The young priest Joseph Mohr and the teacher and organist Franz Xaver Gruber got together and created the text and music of the song.

The village church of St. Nikola was destroyed by floods in 1899 and the present day memorial chapel was erected in 1937. It is an attraction for tourists from all corners of the globe. The chapel’s visitors’ book contains a large number of famous names, but it was an anonymous visitor who wrote the following lines about the carol “Silent Night”: Do not forget that this is one of Austria’s most precious gifts to the world.

The photos show the present chapel and a reverse glass painting by the artist Andreas Grubinger, who is from nearby Thalgau. He painted this picture in memory of the village of Oberndorf a it may have looked in 1818.

Austria – a young person’s account

My name is Maria and I am 12 years old. I am writing this article to explain what the under 15s think and feel about Austria. My family and I are very lucky to be able to go there every year either to visit family or to go skiing. But what do my brother and I think about this mountainous country in the centre of Europe. Firstly, they have very clean and pleasant facilities, which don’t just appeal to adults and under 5 year olds. For example, the swimming pools are always spotless and the changing rooms are immaculate. Also, in my experience, they always have an exciting slide and a very nice café.

Another positive aspect is that you can go skiing there: on REAL snow. If you are a beginner, they have lifts and instructors to help you. On the other hand, if you are more experienced, then they have the full range of blue to black routes. I find this sense of freedom is loved by children, especially if it isn’t the norm.

Although, the one aspect I would change about Austria is that it is behind in some aspects of life like smoking and alcohol. This is a bit annoying and disgusting as well. This particularly affects children because there are few non-smoking areas in pubs and restaurants. It would be great if the smoking ban was more widely applied.

There is only one downside of course and that is knowing that your holiday is going to end!
How I met Clarissa

by Erika Lang, life member of the Anglo Austrian Society

In the late 1950’s I worked in a restaurant called ‘The Guilded Cage’ in the Kings Road, Chelsea. The busy restaurant was frequented by a mixture of people and customers included Mary Quant, famous and not so famous actors, pop stars, King Street shoppers and many other people who lived in the bedsits in the local area.

One of my regular customers was a lady called Clarissa, who worked at the Royal Court Theatre in Sloane Square. One day she told me that she was the daughter of the great Robert Stolz. She also informed me that the production, which she was involved in, had now finished and she was going back to Vienna: “Is there anything I can send you”, she said by a way of goodbye. I thought for a second and said: “yes please, I would love some Ildefonso.” (An Austrian nougat classic)

Very soon after that I changed jobs and 3 months later, when I happened to pass the restaurant, a waiter rushed out and told me that a parcel had arrived for me. He handed me a box of 100b delicious Ildefonso, which must have cost a lot of money. Although I knew who had sent them, I didn’t have an address and had no way to say “Thank You”.

Many years later, I attended an event of the Anglo Austrian Society at the Berners Hotel in the Westend and was lucky enough to meet Mrs Elaine Keys, the Secretary and pianist of the Friends of Robert Stolz and another lady called Margaret McKenzie. I told them the story of Clarissa and they later sent me a book about Robert Stolz and another lady called Margaret McKenzie. I told them the story of Clarissa and they later sent me a book about Robert Stolz and told me that they had spoken to Clarissa and that she remembered me. I became a member of Friends of Robert Stolz and later become its treasurer. Last summer I met up with Clarissa in Vienna.

Friends of Robert Stolz meet twice a year for an evening concert, usually in October and April. We have some fantastic singers and the membership is a mere £10 per year.

Stammtisch News

The Southern Stammtisch is very busy and well attended as always. We have gained another four new members recently. Our lively monthly meetings are in the Jack Phillips public house in the High Street of Godalming, Surrey and we go from strength to strength. We meet there on the third Saturday of each month at 12.00 noon from January to October.

In November we meet in St. Catherine’s Village Hall in Guildford for our traditional annual Kaffee und Kuchen Stammtisch. In December we are back at the Jack Phillips again, but on the second Saturday in the month to avoid the Christmas shopping rush.

Please ensure that you firstly contact us on the number/email address below before attending any of our meetings, just in case there have been any last minute alterations. You are all very welcome to join us.

For those who are interested, Jack Phillip was the radio operator on the “Titanic”, who stayed at his post sending distress calls out as the vessel was sinking under him. He only stopped doing that when the radio shack was completely flooded and his heroics action saved many lives that day. Jack was a local man who lived in Godalming, and there is a small display of Titanic information inside “his” pub here.

We have just had our “Kaffee und Kuchen”, attended by 27 of our members (sadly no guide dog this year- Ozzy has retired from his duties and gone to a new home), as always it was a most enjoyable and lively event. Our members bring along their own Austrian cooking for us to enjoy. We regularly arrange group outings for our members, the last one to the Tilford Sculpture Park.
December 2018

How to contact the Anglo Austrian Society:

Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 08.00 - 14.00h  
Phone: 01494 711116  e-mail: enquiries@angloaustrian.org.uk  
Website: www.angloaustrian.org.uk

Local Stammtisch Meetings

Chiltern Stammtisch: Meets on the last Saturday of the month for lunch at the Boot and Slipper Pub, Amersham on the Hill.  
Contact: Brigitte Kreuger via the office

Southern Stammtisch: Meets monthly on the 3rd Saturday at midday, except in December, at the Jack Phillip Pub in Godalming.

London Stammtisch: Meets every 2nd Tuesday of each month at 12.30 p.m, at the K&K Hotel George, Templeton Place, SW5 near Earls Court Tube station.  
Members visiting London are always welcome to join us.

Contact: Christine Gadsby for dates and times.  
Oxford Uni. Austrian Soc.: oxford.austriansociety@gmail.com

Wirral Stammtisch: Meets monthly on the 2nd Saturday at 12.30 p.m at The Glegg Arms, Heswall.

Useful websites:  
Published by:
News: www.news.ORF.at  
Holidays: www.austria.info/uk  
Culture: www.acflondon.org  
Embassy: www.bmeia.gv.at/oeb-london/  
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