

Anglo - Austrian

Society

Since 1944



Winter Edition 2021

www.angloaustrian.org.uk

Message from the Chairman

As we come to the end of another year during which the pandemic has continued to impact on our lives, I am sending you this message of good wishes for the festive season and for the year ahead. I hope that this time you are able to do at least some of the things that traditionally bring you pleasure at the turn of the year. And we must all be hoping that 2022 proves to be a year offering more possibilities for renewing contacts and for re-establishing the patterns of activity that we most enjoy.

You will have seen from the letter I sent to you all in November, that 2022 will bring some changes for The Anglo-Austrian Society as well. After more than sixteen years, tirelessly looking after our affairs, Allyson Tinnelly is stepping down from her role as the Society's part-time Assistant Secretary at the end of this year. Lockdown showed us that we no longer need the existing office base in order to deal with the administration of the Society and its activities. So the Trustees have decided not to renew the rental of the High Wycombe office. By reducing costs, we will be able to focus our charitable funds on our main charitable aim - promoting friendship and sharing knowledge and experience between Britain and Austria.

For you, our members, we want things to continue much as before. The Trustees have always been actively engaged in the running of the Society and this will continue to be the case. Helen Ramsden, a member of the Chiltern Stammtisch, now takes care of membership administration; Headley Beeson looks after our finances; Brigitte Kreuger oversees the website and social media; and so on. The Society will still be here for you all. And we do want to hear from you. As now, the easiest way to make contact will continue to be by email. The email addresses to use when you want to reach us are on the back page of this Newsletter. So is the new postal address which the Society will be using from 2022. These details will also be available on the Society's website from January.

As Editor of the Newsletter, Hans Woerndl has done a stellar job - one which I know has been much appreciated by members. But as was announced in September, this is his last issue as Editor. From next Spring, there will be a new face in the editorial chair. Look through these pages to discover who this will be, and for various other items which I hope will capture your attention and provide interesting reading, even at this busy time of year.

All good wishes

Dame Janet Ritterman, Chairman

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Message from Rob Hopkins – the next Editor of our Newsletter



I'd like to introduce myself as I have been passed the baton to undertake the role of Editor for The Anglo-Austrian Society Newsletter, for which I feel very honoured and privileged, especially after the superb work Hans Woerndl and the many contributors have undertaken over the years. Big shoes to fill! Thank you all for doing such a sterling job!

Well, a little information about your new Editor! My name is Robert (Rob) Hopkins; I have been a member of the Society for quite a few years now and thoroughly enjoy my association with it. I live in Evesham, a small rural town in the county of Worcestershire, and have done so most of my life. I'm a retired bank manager, having spent some 32 years with the same employer! I have a son, Thomas, who is just completing his Masters degree in Nuclear Physics at the University of Birmingham. I have recently undertaken a part time position with The Post Office visiting local communities in order to provide a post office for my local villages. I really enjoy the fact that I am able to offer this valuable service to my local communities.

Socially, I am a member of two local Amateur Dramatic groups and I normally take part in at least two productions each year - plays, musicals and.... even Panto! I am also active in my local church - often as a Worship Leader. I enjoy many genres of music although, of course, the music composed by the Strauss family remains a firm favourite!

So now a new chapter begins for the Society's Newsletter, which is already a great publication and serves the Society well. I will certainly be encouraging members to share with us their wealth of knowledge and experience of Austria, the people, current news, culture and heritage so that we may all experience the beauty and richness the country has to offer. I look forward to meeting many of you, in time, and would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to send me items that could be used in future publications. You can find my email address on the back page of this Newsletter.

So here's to 2022 and may it be kind to us all!

Frohe Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch ins neue Jahr!

Rob

A Poignant Operetta in Eastern Germany

On Saturday 18th September 2021 my sister and I sat in the audience as guests of the opera-house for the opening night of the first performance on German soil of an operetta written in 1937 by a Jewish composer and a Jewish librettist. How did that come about?

The short answer is that the librettist was my uncle Hugo Königsgarten (1904 – 1975). But

it was a poignant occasion and the story is perhaps worth telling. My uncle was born in Brno (now in the Czech Republic but then part of Austria) in 1904. His father died when he was very young and he moved with his mother and younger brother first to Vienna, and in 1915 when she re-married, to Berlin. In 1930 he obtained a doctorate in Philosophy at Heidelberg University before returning to Vienna in 1933 and establishing himself as a writer, dramatist and librettist. He was also a leading member of an underground cabaret theatre called the “Laterndl” producing anti-Nazi sketches. In 1937 he combined with the Austrian composer Erich Zeisl (1905 – 1959) to produce the satirical comic opera “Leonce und Lena”, based on the play of that name by the German playwright Georg Büchner (1813 – 1837). The first performances were scheduled for April 1938, but were of course immediately banned following the Anschluss in March. Hugo and Zeisl both in fact fled, Hugo the day after the Anschluss (and two days before the Gestapo came to arrest him) to England via Switzerland thanks to his Czech passport, and Zeisl via Paris to Los Angeles.

There was a production of the opera in Los Angeles in 1952, but the work remained unperformed in Europe until April 2017, when it received its first Austrian performance in Linz – a poignant venue, being the city where Hitler’s troops first crossed the border in 1938. (The production team added to the irony by casting the comic king in the piece as a caricature of Hitler himself.) The Viennese music publishers Doblinger got my contact details from the composer’s daughter Barbara Schoenberg and invited my sister and me to the opening performance. The production was a great success and well-received. Then earlier this year I was contacted by the Eduard-von-Winterstein-Theater in the small German town of Annaberg-Buchholz who had chosen this work to re-open their theatre in September after 18 months of lockdown. Their new director had been at the performance in Linz in 2017 and was impressed by the work. I was invited to provide a photo and some background material on Hugo for the programme, and my sister and I were again invited to the opening performance. (I should perhaps mention that Hugo had no children – so we were in effect the next-of-kin.)

Annaberg-Buchholz is very close to the Czech border and the most convenient



airport is Prague, so one fine week in mid-September my sister Tessa and I spent a few lovely days in Prague before hiring a car and driving over the border to Annaberg, where we were treated with the utmost hospitality. The theatre laid on a small reception and a press conference, and we talked much about Hugo's life and work, and they talked in the most flattering terms about his libretto, which the conductor emphasised was phrased in such a way as to ideally suit the bars of the music. One of the directors described the whole work as "ein Opernerlebnis zwischen Kurzweil und Tiefsinn, zwischen musikalischer Plauderei und träumerisch-ausladender Leidenschaftlichkeit".

My uncle would have been truly amazed that his work had found a new life in the 21st century and the opera-house seemed glad to have our company. Zeisl's grandson (whose other grandfather was the composer Arnold Schönberg) was also due to attend a performance later in October. It was a moving occasion and a very memorable visit.

Michael Garton - October 2021

In Memoriam TIM PASHLEY - 1955 – 2021

Tim was born in Birmingham and educated at King Edward VI Grammar School in Stratford on Avon, where he was Head Boy. He gained an Open Exhibition to read Modern History at Brasenose College, Oxford, graduating in 1977. After Oxford he worked for Raleigh bicycles in the export department and in 1980 he joined the family bicycle business, W R Pashley. The company was founded by his grandfather William Rathbone Pashley in 1926.

In 1995 Tim moved to the Birmingham law firm Dibb, Lupton, Broomhead and the following year to the city of London, where he joined the international city law firm of Watson, Farley and Williams who specialised in shipping. After a brief spell with Norton Rose he became Commercial Director and Head of Strategy with Watson, Farley and Williams.

He coped for nearly ten years with his daily commute of five hours by train from Moreton in Marsh to Liverpool Street in London and during this time Tim would research and write novels. In 2005 Tim moved to the Oxford law firm Morgan Cole, where he stayed until his retirement in 2011. He then returned to study at Oxford and took a German course to learn the language. He wrote many book reviews for the Times Literary Supplement and his interests included literature, history, gardening, politics and cricket, supporting Warwickshire, cooking, gardening and cycling being a member of the Centenary Club for members of British bicycle manufacturing companies. He was a Trustee and Director of the Anglo- Austrian Society, being responsible for starting up and leading the Oxford Stammtisch. Above all Tim was a family man who adored his three children and would take his family to North Wales to spend frequent holidays by the coast.

Burgenland celebrates its 100. Anniversary

The Burgenland has some strange features. It is the youngest province of Austria, yet it claims to be one of the oldest. For a time it belonged to Hungary and during this period it held a brilliant position in Austrian intellectual life, boasting of such mighty names as Haydn and Liszt.

The plain to the north of the Neusiedlersee was always one of vast estates, which produced much of the food for Vienna. Many examples of Baroque art can be found here and the great architect Lukas von Hildebrandt and others were commissioned to work there for the Magyar feudal landowners, Esterhazy, Batthyany and so on. His work had a profound influence on the architecture of the Habsburg Empire.

The name Burgenland is taken from three castles which no longer lie within its frontier, but it boasts other wonderful castles as well. One of them is Schlaining Castle, which was first documented more than 750 years ago.

Since the beginning of the this summer Schlaining castle is hosting the anniversary exhibition and the 100-year history of the state is brought to life by a series of multimedia installations. Visitor can explore a total of 12 sections packed with interesting details on the formation of the Burgenland, its political history, matters of identity and homeland, its economy and environment, tales of emigration and refugees, and its cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

You can take a vivid look at the state through the years and see how Burgenland went from a poor and isolated region to one of the most innovative and 'quality of life' corners of Europe. The exhibition offers an in-depth assessment of the moments in history when the state played a key role in global developments – including the 1956 Hungarian uprising, the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the refugee crisis in 2015.



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The AAS Virtual Stammtisch

Our Virtual Stammtisch has now been going for almost a year. We meet online on the fourth Friday of every month (except December) at 6.15pm (UK time). The members who take part come from many different parts of the UK – from the far north (Aberdeen) to Wales and the West Country. And to our great delight, members in Vienna, Berlin and Salzburg also join us on screen. As one member said recently, the Virtual Stammtisch seems to have been one of the (few) benefits of lockdown, particularly for those members who are not able to take part in one of the regional Stammtisch groups. For each of our meetings, we have a speaker – so far, this has always been an Austrian speaker – who provides an introductory talk. After this we divide into two breakout groups – one English-speaking group, one German-speaking. Each group has a moderator from among the members, who encourages those on the call to chat about some of the things mentioned in the talk and to share similar personal experiences. The speaker spends some time with each group, so there is always the chance to ask questions as well.

Here is a list of the talks that those attending the 2021 Virtual Stammtisch evenings have enjoyed. At our first meeting, it was suggested that we might focus on the various Austrian Bundesländer, so you will see this reflected in the topics below:

February - Moving from Oxford to Berlin during the pandemic; Florian Thomas, former AAS Trustee and member of the Oxford Stammtisch, and Dr Caitlin Hulcup, Professor of Voice, Universität der Künste, Berlin

March - Living and working in the Südsteiermark; Prof Dr Georg Schulz, Rektor, Kunstuniversität Graz

April - Vorarlberg: Austria's westernmost Bundesland is full of surprises; Prof. Andrea Dlaska, former Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Surrey and Middlesex University

May - Carinthia – my homeland – childhood memories; Brigitte Kreuger, AAS Trustee, Chiltern Stammtisch Co-ordinator

June – Salzburg – a unique Austrian city; Dr Eugen Banauch Head, Research Management Department, Universität Mozarteum, Salzburg

July - Memories of growing up in the Innviertel (Oberösterreich); Em. Prof. Dr. Josef Auböck, former Head of Department of Dermatology, AKH Linz

August - The Roman Settlement Iuenna - A hidden gem in the South of Carinthia; Dr Stefan Tino Kulnik, Principal Investigator Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Digital Health and Prevention, Salzburg

September - The County of Salzburg – between tradition and innovation Waltraud Dennhardt-Herzog, Director of the Austrian Cultural Forum, London.

October - The Tyrol – glimpses into the geography, history and the traditions of this alpine province; Frank Ortner, First Secretary & Consul, Austrian Embassy, London

November - Memories of an Austrian Christmas; Contributions from AAS Members, including Ingrid Todd, Ulrike Wright, Florian Thomas.

Our Virtual Stammtisch is, of course, open to all members of the Society. If you would like to join these sessions, all you need to do is to send me an email message – chairman@angloaustrian.org.uk – to confirm your interest. In order to take part, all you then need is your own (free) Zoom account. Why not give it a try? It would be good to see you online in 2022.

Bequests received by the Anglo-Austrian Society

The Angela Krosik Doctoral Award, which was made possible by a bequest from the estate of the late Angela Krosik, and which is awarded on a triennial basis, has been awarded this year to Felix Wagner.

Felix, whose family lives in Eisenstadt, completed his Masters degree this year at the Technische Universität in Vienna and was offered a place to undertake full-time research on artificial intelligence in the health sector at the Big Data Institute of the EPSRC Center for Doctoral Training in Health Data Science at the University of Oxford. The support that Felix will now receive from the Angela Krosik Award has made it possible for him, as an Austrian student, to take up this place. We wish him every success with his doctoral studies and look forward to following his progress in the coming years.

The bequests which the Society receives makes it possible for us to provide grants for study and for various types of project which help to foster relationships between Austria and the United Kingdom. The bequest from the estate of the late Robert James Avery, mentioned at this year's AGM and in the last Newsletter, will be used for these purposes. Mr Avery, who lived in Esher, was a member of the Society for almost forty years. If you – or someone you know – is undertaking a project which would benefit from an Anglo-Austrian Society grant, do look at the details on the website, in the 'Grants' section. Applications can be submitted at any time.

How to contact The Anglo-Austrian Society (from January 2022)

Please contact the Society by email and direct your message to the email address that seems most relevant to your query.

e-mail: enquiries@angloaustrian.org.uk; grants@angloaustrian.org.uk
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Website: www.angloaustrian.org.uk

Postal address: Needham Cottage, Needham Green, Hatfield Broad Oak,
Bishops Stortford, CM22 7JT, UK

Correspondence sent to this address will be forwarded as appropriate.

Useful websites:

News: www.news.ORF.at

Holidays: www.austria.info/uk

Culture: www.acflondon.org

Austrian Embassy: www.bmeia.gv.at/oeb-london/

Weltweit Freunde: www.austrians.org

Austrian Business in the UK: www.advantageaustria.org

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