

Good Evening Everyone, and a Happy New Year to you all!

I would like to start by welcoming new members - Laura Schmidt-Thomé and Carima Joho-Heute in 2019. and Johannes Schwefel and Susan Leibfried in January this year.

Looking back, the DBG RN had a good year last year. We maintained a steady membership of around 100 members.

We had a total of 7 speakers events, including a talk on British politics by Andy in March. 2 months after that Andy was voted in as our new Treasurer, replacing Pete Burton, who has meanwhile moved to Essen to take up a new job there.

So welcome once more to the Executive Committee Andy. In May we also had a fascinating talk by Beverley on The English Colony in Hd.

And in July Renate organised a group to see Mid-Summer Nights Dream performed at the Schloss by the American Drama Group of Munich.

We ended the year with a special event in the Hotel Ritter- to celebrate my receiving the MBE from the Queen in Windsor at the end of October. The Queen did not come to the Ritter but Herr Würzner the OB did, as well as the president of the F/Main DBG, and Ellis Neu's sister Sue Mason, who came over from Oxford. Images of the party will soon be made available, and we will send you a link to them in due course.

The members of this society who nominated me for the MBE - about 3 years ago - and did the paperwork supporting it were Renate, my deputy, dear friend Prof. Fletcher DuBois, and Elisabeth Kröger. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them once more for what they did. Because of various other prior commitments, none of these 3 were able to come with me to Windsor, but Andrea, our publicity person was able to go, and she and another friend based in England, Stuart, accompanied me on the big day. Andrea put together an album of photos of the day.

Andy Warhol once predicted that we would all be famous for 5 minutes in our lives, and since returning I have been in the media quite a bit, so I have had more than my 5 minutes worth.... People seem to assume that having now met the Queen, she and I are in regular email contact....

I get asked all manner of questions about her, which if I answered might put me in the Tower. However, I am pleased to report that since returning from Windsor my classes in court etiquette and curtsying techniques have really taken off.... Sorry - my apologies to all republicans present.

So where are we now at the beginning of the new year? Well, we have a full programme of events - in 1st February there will be a private tour of the KPM exhibition in English. Please register with Renate for that.

At the end of February, we have a speaker coming from Cambridge to talk about the future of the Left and the Labour Party. He was recommended to us by David Mourton.

In March, when spring is imminent, we have a topic to warm the heart - Love - by Professor Mary Evans.

And in May we have a very high profile speaker coming - Vernon Bognador - a constitutional expert, who is well-known for his political lecture series on television.

I won't go through the whole programme here, but please do look on the website - the whole year's programme is listed up there.

Amazingly, I have managed to get through most of my speech without once mentioning the B word. And I prefer to keep it that way because, like many of you here tonight, I am not happy with the outcome of the December elections and the current situation at all. And it makes our life here in Germany, with our German neighbours and friends harder. Most Germans I meet are baffled by us Brits right now, and I think we will have our work cut out for us in the year to come.

So I do thank you all for continuing to support the work of DBG Rhein Neckar. I think our role as a forum for understanding and exchange will be more important now than ever. And I hope we will all be successful in that endeavour!

2020 means having perfect vision, so I wish us all a good vision for the year 2020, and all the best for the new decade!

Nichola Hayton MBE