

Liebe Leserinnen und Leser,

seit fast zwei Jahren sind die Aktivitäten unserer Gesellschaft wegen der Auswirkungen der Pandemie weitgehend lahm gelegt und die Hoffnung, dass wir in diesem Jahr wenigstens wieder eine Christmas Party feiern können, die ja schon im letzten Jahr Corona zum Opfer gefallen war, hat sich in den vergangenen Wochen leider aus dem gleichen Grund in Luft aufgelöst. Wegen der angeordneten Bestimmungen hatte sich der Vorstand dafür entschieden, die Feier nicht durchzuführen. Wegen dieser Bestimmungen musste auch schon die eigentlich für den 25.11. geplante Jahreshauptversammlung und Vorstandswahl abgesagt werden. Wir hoffen jedoch (wieder eine Hoffnung!), diese am letzten Donnerstag im Januar, das ist der 27.1., nachholen zu können. Die mit der letzten Ausgabe des Newsletters ausgegebenen Wahlscheine behalten vorerst ihre Gültigkeit. Wie es jedoch weitergeht, sollte sich bis dahin die Lage nicht entspannen, ist momentan noch ungeklärt.

Das einzige Vorhaben neben unseren Konversationszirkeln, das wir in diesem Jahr auf die Beine stellen konnten, war der Grillnachmittag im September, über den Frau Böhme einen Bericht verfasst hat, den Sie gleich im Anschluss lesen können.

In weiteren Beiträgen in dieser Ausgabe geht es um das bekannte Lied „Rudolph, the red-nosed Reindeer“ und wie es entstanden ist (Seite 3) sowie den Ort Bath im Südwesten Englands, seine Thermalquellen und die Spuren der römischen Besatzung (Seite 7). Ein Artikel auf Seite 11 berichtet über ein sogenanntes Straw Bear Festival, das traditionell jedes Jahr im Januar in der kleinen Stadt Wittlesea gefeiert wird und das auch einen Ableger in Deutschland hat.

Wir hoffen, dass Ihnen diese Ausgabe unseres Newsletters gefällt, und wünschen Ihnen ein angenehme Weihnachtszeit sowie alles Gute für das Neue Jahr. Bleiben Sie gesund!

Die Redaktion

Was lange währt, wird gut!

Unsere Grillparty am 14.09.2021

Endlich ist es wieder soweit. Nach 15 Monaten Grill – Abstinenz soll es nun endlich wieder losgehen. Alle Vorbereitungen wurden dazu in einer Vorstandssitzung Ende August beraten und geplant. Unsere Mitglieder wurden im Vorfeld auch eingeladen. Am 14.09. um 16.00 Uhr versammelten sich 12 Mitglieder unserer Gesellschaft im Garten der Neuen Arbeit Chemnitz, um dieses Event endlich wieder zu feiern. Alle Zutaten, die zu so einem Grillnachmittag erforderlich sind, standen schon bereit, doch nichts ging los. Was war passiert? Natürlich, die Grillkohle kann sich nicht selbst entzünden. Das hatten wir in unserer Planung vergessen: Wir brauchen ja auch Grillanzünder! Nun war guter Rat teuer. Unser bewährter Grillmeister Thomas Mehnert und Frau Zimmer machten sich eilenden Schrittes auf in die nahe gelegene Sachsenallee, um dieses wichtige Gut zu besorgen. Die Zeit verrinnt, wo bleiben die beiden denn bloß? In der Zwischenzeit probierten wir hier schon mal die einzelnen Salate, die von einigen unserer Mitglieder hergestellt wurden sowie das selbstgebackene Brot von Herrn Wagner. Nach 45 Minuten tauchten die beiden endlich mit dem Grillanzünder und natürlich auch mit den ebenfalls notwendigen Streichhölzern, die laut Auskunft der beiden gar nicht so einfach in der Sachsenallee zu finden waren, auf. Nun ja, man grillt eben nicht alle Tage und für die nächste Grillparty müsste dann alles an Deck sein.

Wie sagt man so schön: "Was lange währt, wird gut" - das passte genau auf unser diesjähriges Treffen. Jetzt konnte es endlich losgehen und der Grill nach 45 Minuten Wartepause in Gang gesetzt werden. Die Steaks und Roster, deren Beschaffung wie in den Vorjahren in den Händen von Frau Rotstein lag, fanden nun endlich auf dem Grill ihren Platz und unser Grillmeister Thomas legte sich voll ins Zeug. Vom Hausmeister des Otto-Brenner-Hauses erhielt er zu Beginn volle Unterstützung. Wir hatten ja alle Hunger auf diese Köstlichkeiten, auch wenn wir schon einzelne Salate, wie Nudel-, Kartoffel- und Gurkensalat im Vorfeld gekostet hatten. Auch das selbstgebackene Brot kam neben den Brötchen zum Einsatz, was allen ebenfalls sehr gut mundete. Ebenso die jeweiligen Getränke, die Herr Rosch über den Getränkehandel Schuster in Kommission organisierte, wurden nicht verschmäht.

Beim gemütlichen Beisammensein verging die Zeit wie im Fluge. Doch auch dieses Mal schafften wir es nicht, alles zu verputzen. Also musste jeder etwas von dem Grillgut, eingewickelt in Alufolie, mit nach Hause nehmen.

Das Abwaschen des Geschirrs konnten wir uns heute sparen. Das übernahmen am nächsten Morgen Mitarbeiter der Neuen Arbeit Chemnitz bzw. deren Geschirrspüler. Wir sagen Danke auch an den Hausmeister, der uns beim Angrillen aktiv zur Seite stand. Gegen 19 Uhr war die Ordnung weitestgehend wieder hergestellt.

Resümee des diesjährigen Grillnachmittags: Es hat allen wieder sehr gut gefallen und wir hoffen und wünschen uns, dass auch 2022 wieder ein solcher schöner Grillnachmittag stattfinden kann. Das Wetter hat auch seinen guten Beitrag dazu geleistet.

Übrigens: Grillparty ist eine feine Sache, sagen alle.

Dorothea Böhme

RED-NOSED RUDOLPH

We all know the song about Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer that pulls together with other reindeer the sleigh of Santa Claus at Christmas. But do you know how this song came about?



The reindeer connects the Old World and the New in complicated mythical and zoological ways. Old World deer species originate in Asia. New World deer species evolved three million years ago in temperate forests, which are now the Arctic areas of North America and East Siberia.

Once nine sub-species of reindeer lived wild over much of northern Europe. They were reintroduced to Scotland in 1952 by Mikel Utsi, a determined Swede who discovered from the Orkneyinga saga that eight centuries ago the ancient Earls of Orkney hunted reindeer in Caithness; he established a herd of Swedish reindeer in the Cairngorms. The North American sub-species are called by the French-Canadian name, caribou.

Northern Europe has often associated deer with Christmas, as in the traditional Christmas carol *The Holly and the Ivy*:

The rising of the sun
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.

Deer in snow are essential to Christmas card landscapes. But it was America that put reindeer - not caribou from the New World but the flying reindeer of Old World myth - on the Christmas map.

In 1804 the newly founded New York Historical Society claimed St. Nicolas as its patron. In 1809, Washington Irving published a satirical *History of New York*, laughing at New York's Dutch past, including "Sinterklaas".

His second edition (1812) showed Nicolas riding "over the tops of the trees in that selfsame waggon wherein he brings his yearly presents to children." In 1821, William Gilley wrote a poem about furclad "Santeclaus", driving a sleigh pulled by - here it comes at last - a reindeer. In 1824 came Henry Livingstone's poem *A Visit from St. Nicolas*. It opened with the famous line "'Twas the night before Christmas ..."

A century later, the Montgomery Ward department store in Chicago launched an advertising campaign and commissioned an employee, Robert May, to write a promotional poem based on Livingstone's poem. May invented a character called Rudolph, the misfit reindeer. For Christmas 1939, the store gave away two million copies of May's poem. By 1946, it was printing six million. Next year it transferred the copyright on the Rudolph story to May, its creator, who sold it commercially. In 1949 May's brother-in-law Johnny Marks wrote the song and Gene Autry recorded it. If you loathe the song, they are the ones to blame. Rudolph is a child of pure commerce.

Rudolph is cute, but older reindeer myths are darkly ambivalent. In his poem *The Fall of Rome*, W. H. Auden used migrating reindeer as an image for the barbaric world on the move against civilization. They are the unknown hordes, massing to attack:

Altogether elsewhere vast
herds of reindeer move across
miles and miles of golden moss
silently and very fast.

(Source: The Times, 21 Dec. 2002, author: Ruth Padel)

This and that from the 'island'

Ladies' lavatories listed

Two early examples of rare ladies' loos in Berwick upon Tweed and Seaburn have been given Grade II listed status. Veronica Fiorato from *Historic England* said: "Many people often think of listed buildings only as churches, castles and grand stately homes but buildings like toilets are also an important part of our nation's rich history."



Berwick

at the beginning of the 20th century. The appearance of toilets like these represented the gradual opening up of a world of new leisure and work opportunities previously unavailable to women.

Public toilets were introduced in the second half of the 19th century but the vast majority were for men only. The first ladies' loo opened in Oxford Circus in 1884 but women's public toilets were relatively uncommon until after World War One.

Historic England said there were various reasons why women were not given public toilets. In the Victorian era ladies were deemed too modest to "answer the call of nature" away from home, while another theory suggests it was a "cynical ploy" to control women's movements and ambitions becoming known as the "urinary leash."

The Bank Hill toilet in Berwick opened in the year 1899 while the loos on the seafront at Seaburn in Sunderland date from between 1901 and 1904. On its first day, it attracted 62 customers. It remained as a toilet until the 1950s, after which it was used for council storage and later an ice cream parlour called *Louvre*.

The Seaburn toilets closed in the 1960s but reopened in 2018. They retain many of their original features including hand basins, urinals and toilets, as well as the decorative partitions in the washroom and cubicles.

The lavatories in Berwick and Seaburn reflect the emerging changing social status of women



Seaburn

Cedric

A swan has got its human neighbours spitting feathers — by knocking on their front doors for hours on end.

The feathered pest called Cedric pecks at letterboxes with its beak in noisy displays which torment residents, often waking them. It opens and closes the mail slot door like a door-knocker. It has been terrorizing the neighbourhood with its persistent door-knocking over the last five years, residents say.

Victim Stephen Legg, 70, said: "It doesn't do any damage but it's extremely irritating. Sometimes it does it for three hours at a time, other times only once or twice. It is a bloody nuisance."

Cedric has targeted a row of homes opposite the lake where it lives in Northampton but seems to have taken a particular liking to Legg's home.

No one knows why it does it — it could be territorial behaviour or perhaps it is looking for food.

Retired nurse Wendy Howard, 63, who lives nearby, said: "It is pretty funny to see when walking past. But I'm glad it isn't my house because it is very noisy."



Paternity leave

Similar to maternity leave for women, paternity leave for new fathers is becoming more and more mainstream in many firms and companies. Now, a UK firm is offering its employees another novel benefit: 'paternity leave' — a paid day off when they buy a new dog, cat or horse to help the animal settle into their new home.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the firm behind the scheme is Pets At Home, which is introducing the policy for its 8,200 staff – 95 per cent of whom are pet-owners.

Chief executive Ian Kellett said: "We want to help and support key events in a colleague's life. We already give a 'flying the nest day' when a child leaves home, a 'new roost day' when you move home, and you get your birthday off as a holiday too. Paternity leave fits right into those. We know that if you have a new dog, cat or horse it can be quite stressful. We want to give them an extra day to settle in. It fits into our ethos – we recognise the importance of pets."

Such moves have also helped stem high staff turnover. In 2004, 78 per cent of all workers at Pets At Home left in a given year; that fell to 20 per cent last year.

Record

Stacking five M&M's on top of each other was enough for civil engineer Will Cutbill of Solihull, Warwickshire, to earn a Guinness World Record. Cutbill said he had long dreamed of getting his name into the Guinness Book of World Records, but it wasn't until the COVID-19 lockdown that he decided to make his dream a reality by balancing five of these candy-coated chocolates.



"It was during the third lockdown in January. I was in the living room, eating a bag of M&M's, and I was incredibly bored, and I just decided to see how many of them I could stack on top of each other," Cutbill told *Birmingham Live*. "I started thinking 'I wonder if there's a world record for this', so I looked it up online and found out the most anyone had ever stacked was four," he said.

Cutbill said he filmed his attempts for two or three hours before he managed to get his stack of five M&M's.

"It's not something I would normally have taken the time to do - especially now that the sun is shining and the pubs are back open - but at the time, there wasn't much else to do so it seemed like time well spent," he said. The record of four M&M's had been jointly held by Silvio Sabba of Italy and Brendan Kelbie of Australia before the record-keeping organization verified Cutbill's video and issued him a certificate in June.

"When I managed to finally stack five M&M's, I was absolutely ecstatic. I thought, 'Oh, my goodness, I've actually done it,'" he said. "Five M&M's doesn't sound like a lot, but it was near impossible to do. so I was chuffed when I achieved it. I thought about attempting six, but there's no chance. Five was hard enough."

(Sources: www.thesun.co.uk/, www.bbc.com/news, www.guinnessworldrecords.com/)

Bathing like the Romans

The Roman Empire isn't immediately associated with Britain, yet the Romans conquered much of the island in the middle of the first century and remained until the beginning of the fifth century. During that time, they built a temple and public bath house dedicated to the goddess Sulis Minerva on the site of a natural spring in what is modern day Bath.



Water is best

Roman goddess Minerva, whom visitors worshipped at the temple and honoured by bathing in the waters believed to have healing properties.

The legacy of the Romans' ingenious designs to harness water and unique cultural practices endured long after their retreat, and today those thermal waters still flow through the ruins of the Roman Baths, which are one of Britain's top tourist attractions. Not only can you visit the ruins of the baths, but you can even take a swim in the sacred water at Thermae Bath Spa, just like the Romans did so many centuries ago.

The natural history of the springs

Bath has three springs that were formed around 10,000 years ago when rainwater sank about a mile below the earth's surface. The network of three springs — the Cross Spring, the Hetling Spring, and the King's Spring — contain 42 different minerals and maintain a temperature of about 114 degrees Fahrenheit (ca. 46°C). King's Spring, which supplies the Roman Baths with 240,000 gallons of water rising to the surface is a magnificent feat of nature, or a gift from the gods if you were Celt or Roman. Without the scientific knowledge we have today, it is not hard to imagine how the people of Britain believed the springs to be a mystical phenomenon.



The Roman Baths museum is located in the centre of the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bath, adjacent to the Pump Room on the same square as Bath Abbey. The Pump Room was built in the 18th century as a place for Bath's society to congregate and drink the spring water, but is now a popular choice for afternoon tea.

Ticket prices for the museum depend on the month and day of the week as well as the season. They are significantly cheaper off-season. You can save money by visiting on a weekday and buying your ticket online. Audio guides are included in the ticket price.

Upon entering the museum, you immediately walk out onto the terrace overlooking the Roman Baths before making your way through the indoor exhibits. The carefully curated museum contains thousands of artifacts, including coins, tombstones and curse tablets. Typically etched on sheets of lead, citizens of Aqua Sulis would write curses against those who wronged them and throw them into the spring where they believed the spirit of the goddess resided.

Next, you walk through the courtyard of the ancient temple where the Romans worshipped and made sacrifices. On display is the gilt bronze head of the goddess Sulis Minerva, most likely belonging to the statue that stood inside her temple looking out onto the sacrifice site. The bridge here will lead you to the final segment of the museum, which showcases and explains the extraordinary engineering skills the Romans demonstrated in building the baths and their drainage system.

Finally, you make it to the main event - the Great Bath. The pool of dark green water is surrounded by columns and if you're visiting in the colder months you'll see steam rising from the thermal waters. Although now open to the elements, the Great Bath used to be covered by a roof during the Roman times. There are several cave-like rooms making up the bathing suites of the East and West Baths to explore from here, and the museum makes it easy to imagine what life was like in the heyday of the Roman Empire with CGI projections.



The eastern baths functioned as changing rooms and saunas for women. Much like modern-day spas, there were also massages and other treatments at the baths. The western baths offered heated rooms for the men and a circular, ice-cold plunge pool. Originally, men and women were allowed to bathe together, but Emperor Hadrian banned this practice during his rule from AD 117 to 138.



As you finish your stroll through the western baths, you have the opportunity to drink the mineral water from a fountain. Public guided tours of the bath complex are offered for free at the top of every hour starting at 10:00 AM.

People were permitted to swim in the water of the Roman Baths until 1978, but it is now considered unsafe to bathe in. Not only are there high levels of bacteria, but the Romans also used lead to line the five-foot pool. Prior to the closure, the UK's National Health Service provided treatment for rheumatism and arthritis in the water.

After walking through the magical ruins of the Roman Baths you will undoubtedly want to bathe in the thermal waters yourself. You can do this at Thermae Bath Spa, a bath house just a few blocks away from where the Romans once gathered and indulged in the healing mineral water.

The most popular spa option for tourists is the "Thermae Welcome", which includes a two-hour spa session plus access to a towel, robe and flip-flops. There are additional spa treatments and packages available as well. You must be at least 16 years old to enjoy the baths.

Thermae does not allow you to book tickets in advance; they ask that you just show up and wait in line. There are unisex locker rooms with private dressing rooms for you to change into your swimsuit. You will receive a wristband upon purchasing your ticket that will act as your locker key.

The Thermae Welcome Pass grants you access to the open-air rooftop pool, the indoor Minerva Bath and the wellness suite. The wellness suite includes showers, an infrared sauna room, a celestial relaxation room with loungers, an ice chamber and two aromatherapy steam rooms. Working your way up, you'll start with a relaxing swim in the large Minerva Bath, followed by a steam session and infrared healing in the wellness suite, and end with the spectacular views from the rooftop pool.



It is suggested to plan your trip so that you can watch the sunset over Bath in the rooftop pool. The modern-day spa functions much like ancient Roman baths - a place to both socialize and relax.

(Source: <https://matadornetwork.com/read/bathe-like-romans-southwest-england/>)

Our language section

Thank you

Wenn man in Großbritannien oder anderen englischsprachigen Ländern jemandem bei irgendetwas geholfen oder einen guten Dienst erwiesen hat, sind wir Deutschen versucht, auf das "thank you" mit einem "please" zu antworten - mit dem gewohnten "bitte schön/bitte sehr" im Hinterkopf, mit dem wir dem Dankenden üblicherweise mitteilen, dass es uns ein Vergnügen oder auch selbstverständlich war, behilflich zu sein. Das ist allerdings falsch, denn das Wort "please" wird geäußert, wenn man um etwas bittet. Die passende Antwort auf ein "thank you" ist natürlich "you're welcome" oder auch "you're very welcome", wenn man das "bitte schön" noch verstärken möchte.

Es gibt allerdings eine ganze Reihe weiterer Ausdrücke, mit denen man auf ein "thank you" antworten kann. Besonders in den Vereinigten Staaten und unter jüngeren Leuten, die möglicherweise alles etwas lockerer sehen, hört man manchmal "no problem" oder "no worries". Ebenfalls in Amerika wird oftmals nur das kleine Wörtchen "sure" geäußert.

Wenn es sich um Personen handelt, die sich etwas näher kennen, kann man auch "I know you'd do the same for me", "That's all right" oder einfach "Any time" sagen. Weitere umgangssprachliche Worte sind z.B. "Don't mention it" und "It was nothing".

Wenn es etwas förmlicher sein soll, kann man "The pleasure is mine" und "I'm happy to help" verwenden, wobei es umgangssprachlich mit "my pleasure" bzw. nur "pleasure" dafür auch verkürzte Ausdrücke gibt.

Und sogar mit "thank you" kann man ein Dankeschön erwidern, um anzudeuten, dass es eine Freude war, helfen zu können, wobei die Betonung allerdings auf dem "you" liegen sollte.

Thank you for your attention!

Hidden carols

In der folgenden Buchstabenkette sind die Titel von acht Christmas carols versteckt. Können Sie sie entdecken?

OHOCHRISTMASTREESOGOODKINGWENCESLASTERSILENTNIGHTINGATWELVEDAYSOFCHRISTMASSEAWAYIN
AMANGERLICHARKTHEHERALDANGELSSINGELAMARY'SBOYCHILDERIGTHEHOLLYANDTHEIVYYNUT

Auflösung aus Newsletter Nr. 92 "True or false"

1. An hour has three thousand six hundred seconds. **true**
2. A spider has six legs. **false**
3. The capital of Scotland is Glasgow. **false**
4. My nephew is the daughter of my sister. **false**
5. Shakespeare was an English playwright. **true**
6. A football team consists of 10 players. **false**
7. A tulip is a flower. **true**
8. Copper is a conductor of electricity. **true**
9. My wife's mother is my mother-in-law. **true**
10. New Zealand is a part of Australia. **false**

Straw Bear Festival

The town of Whittlesea, near Peterborough, Cambridgeshire is one of the last towns in England to hold a Straw Bear Festival (14-16 January 2022) - a custom relating to fertility, to encourage crops to grow in the spring. The bear - actually a man covered in straw - is the focus of a parade attended by a host of dancers and musicians, including traditional Morris dancers. The 'Bear' is paraded through the streets in chains before the straw is burnt following a day of celebrations.



These parades date from pagan times and were common during the 19th century: a familiar sight on Plough Monday, the first Monday after Twelfth Night (6 January). A newspaper of 1882 reports that "... he was then taken around the town to entertain by his frantic and clumsy gestures the good folk who had on the previous day subscribed to the rustics, a spread of beer, tobacco and beef".

The tradition fell into decline at the end of the 19th century, the last sighting being in 1909 as it appears that an over-zealous police inspector had forbidden 'Straw Bears' as a form of cadging.

The custom was revived in 1980 by the Whittlesea Society, and for the first time in seventy years a 'Straw Bear' was seen on the streets accompanied by his attendant keeper, musicians and dancers, about 30 in all. Various public houses were visited around the town as convenient places for the 'Bear' and dancers to perform in front of an audience - with much needed refreshment available!

The procession is a colourful sight, with more than 250 dancers, musicians and performers from various parts of the British Isles performing traditional 'Molly', 'Morris', 'Clog' and 'Sword' dancing. There is also American style 'Appalachian' dancing, street performances and Mummings plays. A decorated plough is pulled by 21st century plough boys and is now an established part of the procession. Pubs along the route are sure to be busy.

Although the festivities begin earlier in the week, the Saturday is the only day on which the 'Bear' makes an appearance before the 'Bear Burning' on the Sunday. This leaves the way open for a new bear to be created from the next season's harvest.

In 1999 the Straw Bear made friends with a German Straw Bear from Walldürn, a town in the Neckar-Odenwald district that celebrates its own Straw Bear Festival on the Monday before Shrove Tuesday.

(www.strawbear.org.uk)

CHRISTMAS FUN

What happened to the man who stole an Advent Calendar?

He got 25 days!

What part of the body do you only see during Christmas?

The Mistletoe!

How does Christmas Day end?

With the letter Y!

