



## What has the IWA\_BS been up to?

Dear members,

The Newsletter Team asked me to fill the first page of the current edition – special times call for special measures and I'm very pleased to fulfil the request!

2020 started out in a promising way: We held our first Happy Hour of the year in January and also had an interesting tour of the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum. Both events were well attended and brought joy to the participants.

In February we again held our traditional Happy Hour and then we thought we'd try out something new so on the 20th, we „Banished the Winter Blues“ when we met up at the Altes Zollhaus in Hülperode close to Braunschweig-Watenbüttel. We had fun from the start and it turned out to be an overall enjoyable evening. We'd asked the Ladies to wear a hat and wondered whether our request would find favour with the guests. What can I say: the response was overwhelming. Everybody had different, fun ideas – as was reported in our last edition of the newsletter.

The last event before Corona was a Loriot comedy at the Altstadtkomödie and an excursion to see the beautiful bloom of the spring snowflake.

Up until then, we'd also had a number of meetings of „IWA artists“, exploring options for an exhibition. Sylke and I accompanied this process and it was exciting for us to see the professionalism with which our artists took up this project. We learned quite a lot. We did, however, have to abandon our endeavours. Of course Corona was to blame, but we also realised that this project requires more time than we'd assumed at first. It remains an exciting option and maybe, at some point, we will take it up again.

And then we had the lockdown: contact restrictions, no visits to family or friends, all events were cancelled, theatres, movie theatres, fitness studios, restaurants and shops had to close. Offices were closed as well and home office and home schooling became the new buzzwords. Trips were prohibited and were simply not possible, since hotels were closed as well. You've lived through all that and I'm proud that the people of Braunschweig behaved in such a commendable manner. It was certainly not funny at all having to radically cut back all our activities at a moment's notice. All of a sudden, we had quite a lot of time on our hands – for us and for things, which had been on the to-do-list for quite a while. All excuses to procrastinate were gone. Personally, I finally found the time to read wonderful books – without the usual bad conscience telling me that other things were more important.

I also spent a lot of time in the garden, which was allowed and gave me the chance to be alone with nature. All of a sudden, everything was so much quieter than before: no more planes, hardly any cars – paradisiacal conditions, really, if one is able to ignore the results of all this for a while.

Slowly but surely, the situation is starting to relax and we have started to offer different walks in the area – the response has been very positive! On July 8th, our "Happy Hour" is allowed to re-start under certain conditions. You will receive an invitation soon.

By sending out the Merian Scout Braunschweig magazines, we wanted to let you know that we haven't forgotten you and we also wanted to express our connectedness with all members. We certainly plan to try out some of the magazine's suggestions.

We will get through this together and look ahead with confidence.

“One waits for time to change, we tackle it and act! – loosely based on Dante Alighieri.

Along these lines – stay healthy and I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events!

Marianne Wandt

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## Social Media – Friend and Foe during Corona

As this is meant to be an article about the corona times, I wasn't going to talk about the weather but I was told that my article wouldn't be the same without mentioning it, so here it is: let's face it – the corona lockdown would have been a lot harder without the weather being as nice as it was. Mind you – that is for lucky people like me who were on paid leave from work and didn't have whingeing kids or teenagers at home while trying to manage home office! To be honest, it must have been hell for those families and I do feel deeply for them. I bet the office and even the odd awful colleague looked a lot more tempting after 5 weeks of lockdown at home!

So, how did I fill my time at home besides sorting out the garden, clearing out cupboards, organising paperwork (long overdue!) and cleaning the fridge and the oven (long overdue, too!)? Well, I read a lot of books, completed an unmentionable amount of Sudoku (progressing to a level never achieved before) and spent more time than usual on social media (I normally don't have enough time).

We hear a lot about fake news (let's not even think about Trump's comment that drinking disinfectant can prevent corona and its following spread on social media), conspiracy theories (i.e. that the corona virus is multiplied through mobile phone masts) and other nasty things circulating on social media but I have to say that there were a lot of nice and touching things being posted as well. It was definitely not all bad and it helped us realise what really is important in life.

The British Royal Family was very active during these difficult times, in particular the younger generation, Prince William and Kate. They played Bingo online with old age pensioners and spoke and taught school children online. You should have seen their faces when they realised who was at the other end of the line! A joy to behold and it certainly brought a smile to their faces.

Picture: Metro.com.uk



dailymail.co.uk



A lot of artists gave private concerts online and played some of their most famous songs from their sitting rooms, recording studios or patios – MTV unplugged in a very intimate setting. The biggest event was the huge concert organised by Lady Gaga which involved most of today's well-known singers and bands and was accessible by everyone for free online. This particular concert went on for hours and cheered up millions of people around the world during lockdown and in lieu of real live events taking place. It also collected a hell of a lot of money in support of the World Health Organization. Amazing how many artists they managed to get involved.....

There were also small and individual contributions that were lovely and well worth mentioning. I followed fashion designer Michael Kors who every few days posted a five minute Instagram post of things that are important to him. One day he talked about his favourite coffee table books, his most loved movies involving fashion, his most favoured books and one day he browsed in old photo albums. He said that all these things cheered him up during our difficult times and he shared them with all of us. It was lovely to follow him and there was not a shred of advertising in sight!



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There was also the GLAMOUR magazine who normally celebrates a wine hour in the office on Friday evening. They continued this online via video conference during lockdown. Very recommendable and they all stayed in touch despite being in home office.

On top of this there was an abundance of free make-up tutorials from all the big companies (the most posted one being about great make-up during video calls), lots of cooking demonstrations and tips about what to wear at home in order to not let your fashion sense down completely while lounging around. Mostly it involved looking great from the waist up and wearing anything from pyjama bottoms to joggers below!!!

So I feel that looking back on that time, it wasn't all negative. A lot of people showed that they cared deeply about others and did everything possible to make time pass quickly during the five weeks of lockdown. Life definitely slowed down a pace or two....

That leaves me to wish you all the very best for the weeks to come – whatever they may throw at us. Let us keep our fingers crossed that life will slowly get back to normal (if we remember what 'normal' was!). Look after yourselves and keep safe and healthy and despite everything have a great summer!

Susanne Kandell

### How everybody's doing in these strange times?

For sure I didn't expect IWA meetings in such times and of course nobody is able to foresee how all this will end for all of us.

Every day I am glad when I find out that nobody I know is affected by the virus...means: many WhatsApp connections worldwide....

The influence on everybody's daily procedure can be enormously high depending on the countries regulations... that's what I found out.

Our life right here:

Claus prepares frequently Videokonferenzen to teach students at university AND the students are thankful to receive their credit points to go on!

I am doing "the rest"= no girl to help cleaning means that I do it ... shopping of course with mask( since weeks already!!) and still not getting used to my problems with this as I wear glasses with 3 different parts( Gleitsicht) And the lowest part is usually covered by breathing warm air!!!!

Of course the garden has to be done- thank god no rain during my work.... means 3 more days to loosen the "stone hard" soil and bring in fertilizer ....

All our activities around sailing have to wait until the properties with clubhouses will reopen in Steinhude.

What else: no Yoga, no painting... I mean something instead is offered but doesn't work for me.

So far, so good- let's wait patiently!

Best wishes to all of you, take care, stay in good health, yours

Heike Hohmann



Glamour.com



youtube.com



Kingfeed.net





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## Books of the Month

Compared to “before”, reading’s quite a different experience during Corona times. Those who like to read tend to read more now and there’s nothing like diving into a great story to take your mind off everything else. Still, I sometimes find it hard to concentrate or I catch my thoughts drifting off or tending to connect what I’m reading to what’s happening all over the world - whether regarding the pandemic or the Black Lives Matter protests or anything else really.

Wanting to write about more than one book for a change, this got me thinking how not only books connect to current events but also how books can be connected to each other. Have you ever heard of the parlour game “six degrees of separation”? The idea is based on the assumption that anyone can be linked to anybody else on earth by six steps. I thought I could try connecting a selection of great, absorbing, fascinating books which all left a lasting impression on me.

So how to get from “The Dutch House” to the book at the bottom of my pile, “The Warmth of Other Suns”? Here we go...

I just finished reading **Ann Patchett’s “The Dutch House”**, absolutely loved it and cannot recommend it warmly enough. If you enjoy nostalgic tales about flawed families, complex characters and a bit of fairy-tale-like darkness with twists and surprises, believe me, this is THE book for you! It’s the mesmerising story of a special bond between a brother and a sister, all against the backdrop of the “Dutch House”, a mansion built in the 1920s in Philadelphia and named for their previous owners, a Dutch couple who made a fortune in cigarettes. The mansion is described in such incredible detail that its atmosphere wafts off the pages of the book - the creaking floors, the secret corners, the pictures on the wall and of course the changing set of people inhabiting it.

The connection to the next book is easy, since it’s by the same author. The Orange Prize-winning **“Bel Canto”** (2001) was **Ann Patchett’s** first novel and also an absolute thrill to read. It can be considered “siege literature”, the theme being one of quarantine and isolation and the cause being the hostage-taking of a group of international politicians, executives and a famous American soprano. A strange mix of characters is thrown together and over weeks and weeks, the plot develops and unexpected bonds are formed between hostages and terrorists, the only common language being music. The beautifully written portrait of an exceptional situation, studded with a range of different characters from international backgrounds is enthralling, rich and electrifying.

In **“La Lacuna” by Barbara Kingsolver**, which also won the Orange Prize for Fiction (2010), we follow the protagonist H.W. Shepherd from his childhood in Mexico in the 1930s to the McCarthy era in the U.S., meeting Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and the exiled Soviet revolutionary Leon Trotsky on the way. Shepherd is fictional, but Kingsolver manages to artfully interweave his story with recorded history. “La Lacuna”, like “Bel Canto”, touches on the topic of isolation and quarantine: Back in the 40s and 50s, there were outbreaks of polio during the summers leading to quarantine measures, the closing of schools, public pools, movie theatres, etc. A part of the novel takes place in Asheville, North Carolina, where the worst polio epidemic in the US took place in 1948. The whole town was put under quarantine and whole neighbourhoods were fogged by pesticide.

And there’s the connection to **“A Prayer for the Dying” by Stewart O’Nan**. Published more than 20 years ago, this is the story of a deadly epidemic gripping a small town shortly after the US Civil War. The main character, Jacob Hansen, slightly peculiar and still haunted by memories of the war is the sheriff, preacher and also undertaker of Friendship, Wisconsin. In a desperate attempt to stop the disease from spreading, he puts his town under quarantine. This dark but beautiful novel highlights the incredible scope of Stewart O’Nan. Different settings, differently enthralling subjects – this author is incredibly versatile and definitely one of my overall favourites.

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Take, for example, **“Henry Himself”**, **Stewart O'Nan's** third book about the fictional Maxwell family (the other two being “Emily, Alone” and “Wish You Were Here”). You wouldn't guess that this story about ordinary lives and everyday ups and downs emanated from the same mind which created the horrific and gut-wrenching description of that epidemic gripping small-town Wisconsin! O'Nan's books about the Maxwells shine light on an ordinary family, ordinary lives, triumphs and regrets, ups and downs, all beautifully written and very true to life. Henry keeps reflecting on the way his Highland Park.

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O'Nan's books about the Maxwells shine light on an ordinary family, ordinary lives, triumphs and regrets, ups and downs, all beautifully written and very true to life. Henry keeps reflecting on the way his Highland Park neighbourhood in Pittsburgh has changed in the course of the decades, the main reason being the great migration, the movement of six million African Americans from the South to the North and West between 1915 and 1970. And this exodus forms the connection to my last two book recommendations:

In his first novel, **“The Water Dancer”**, **Ta-Nehisi Coates** (journalist, essayist, intellectual and winner of the National Book Award for his non-fiction works) writes about the horrors of slavery, the man-hunters, African folk tradition and the Underground Railroad. He mixes fact with fiction, joining Hiram, his main character, with the abolitionist Harriet Tubman, who led so many slaves to freedom. In an interview the author gave NPR (National Public Radio), Coates mentioned **“The Warmth of Other Suns”** by **Isabel Wilkerson** and how it was this book about the Great Migration which first confirmed to him that “leaving is resistance”. Wilkerson's award-winning historical study is the last book on my list. I read it a couple of years ago and it left a lasting impression. Especially against the backdrop of current events, this mesmerising account of the exodus of black citizens suffering under Jim Crow and searching for a better life up North is an epic work for which the author interviewed more than a thousand individuals and analysed mountains of data and official records. As a brilliantly written history lesson and a necessary eye-opener, this should be required reading.

Summer's here and we'll hopefully all find the time to relax outside in the sun somewhere – and since for most of us that somewhere will probably be much closer to home than in other years, there's no need to think about how much weight in books you'll be able to throw in that suitcase (no, e-readers are still not my thing...!) So take your pick – all of the books I touched upon are an astounding way to put things into perspective and shine the light on the origins of what is shaking the world today. They also draw you in and take your mind off things... at least for a while...



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## One Last Thought...."What does yours look like?"

Do you remember when face masks became compulsory in Braunschweig at the beginning of May? Yes, we had all thought that the day would come and most people had stocked up or started sewing weeks before and were therefore well prepared for this new round in the game "Face that Corona Challenge".

Back then, I thought I'd have a practice run of masked shopping while it still WASN'T compulsory, so off I went to the grocery store, put my mask and gloves on with a sense of importance and headed for the entrance. My experiment lasted exactly as long as it took for my glasses to fog up completely, so not very long at all! First I thought that I must be doing something wrong and tried adjusting the mask to different positions – up, down, left right – there are really not that many options. While the frustration was growing, I thought I'd try to adapt my breathing technique. Again, methods are quite limited and doing breathing exercises in public with completely fogged-up glasses is not something you want to do for longer than absolutely necessary. Eventually the mask had to come off and by that time I had forgotten half of what I'd come to the store for, mainly because I was hopelessly preoccupied thinking about how I'd manage this raised level of shopping difficulty. With glasses: foggy. Without glasses: blurry.

Another grave mistake of my first masked shopping attempt was to forget NOT to put lipstick on. This automatism when leaving the house needs to stop immediately; during the few seconds I struggled with the fogged-up glasses and kept moving the mask back and forth, lipstick was smearing itself nicely around the lower half of my face. Being oblivious to my Joker-esque look, I pushed the cart along the aisles with a sense of satisfaction, thinking that people are finally learning to make room for each other, when all they were doing is trying to give the mad woman with the makeup problem a wide berth. I was more than slightly embarrassed when, driving off, I finally saw my smeared face in the rear-view mirror of the car.

The rapid propagation of face masks reminded me a bit of when ski helmets first became a thing. When I was growing up, nobody ever wore one and I certainly never planned to. At some point though, maybe 20 years ago, helmets started their slow take-over of the slopes: Parents first started to put them on their kids. And of course we followed suit – protecting our kids is a no-brainer after all! But wearing them ourselves? After all, we'd been skiing for countless years and knew what we were doing! It took a few more years until the spread of the ski helmet was pretty much complete and I had to reluctantly give in to group pressure. No more enjoying that breeze on the face while going down the mountain. A few – mostly older - Austrian incorrigibles still gracefully weave down the slopes, gray hair blowing in the wind. I envy them slightly, I must say...

Back to the present: No, I didn't want to be the last unmasked person, but talk about challenging! In addition to the raised difficulty level of the shopping expedition, there are quite a few other issues to consider.

An obvious one: We'll be seeing some weird tan lines this summer. Exposing the masked face to the sun will consequently require bronzer on the lower part of the face to help transition between the different colour zones. That younger generation who are so adept at "camouflaging" are about to discover a whole new field of activity!

And what about those poor hearing organs?! There will most probably be a sharp rise in protruding ear syndrome. With rubber bands pulling on the ears for hours on end, the Corona-induced Dumbo-look is about to make an appearance. Cosmetic surgeons, get ready to correct!



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### One Last Thought...."What does yours look like?"

There are definitely a few positive aspects of covering the face. For example: "Forgetting" to take off our masks in the car presents us with a credible excuse for ignoring those speeding tickets, asserting that "I have no idea who that person in the picture is". Also, going at least partly incognito is a plus on those days when we're not feeling particularly social – dodging possible on-the-spot conversations is so much easier when half of your face is covered. Maybe in combination with baseball hat und sunglasses this could almost work like an invisibility cloak!

Now that everything's being re-structured in the workplace, maybe different colour face masks could be used to identify department affiliation? That would make it easier to mentally place people you have problems recognizing because of their facial disguise. It could go something like: production - blue masks, research and development - green, purchasing - yellow, accounting - gray (of course...), and so on. Maybe a ceremonial handover of a silver or gold mask could become part of the promotion procedure for upper management? What an incentive! A slight downside: a lot of people will end up wearing colours which don't at all go with their complexion and they'll walk around constantly looking washed-out and close to burn-out.

The mask requirement is a kind of forced trend which has triggered a whole new field of creativity and people have started to wear this modern accessory with a sense of pride. It looks as if some of the mask aficionados had been busy for quite a while designing their personal collection of different fabrics/colours/designs and now FINALLY they're compulsory! Off we go! And since covering faces will most likely remain an issue in our daily lives, it's time for designers to crank up their game. Maybe they're already planning silk and satin couture-masks for that next big charity event – or how about hand painted linen adorned with a few rhinestones for the summer?

Once the current crisis has subsided, will we all hold on to our mask collection in case there's a new wave of infection? I think that's a pretty safe bet. Maybe in our new post-Corona normal, masks will become an everyday thing like umbrellas or hats and scarves. We'll all be well equipped not just for rain and cold but also for pandemic!

Stephanie Cattell



Pictures: 7x7.com



Pictures: Pinterest



Pictures: Paris fashion week- bbc.com



Pictures: Insidehook.com



Pictures: Huffpostbrasil.com



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### Upcoming events

#### July

08.07. - Happy hour - La Vigna

#### September

21.09. – a boat tour of the "Lichtparcours"

#### October

28.10. Annual Members' Meeting

#### November

27.11. IWA Annual Christmas party

We hope that all this will take place as planned – please save the dates!!

Other events are being planned as well – fingers crossed that we'll continue to stay on top of the Corona pandemic. We're optimistic that we'll have a few chances yet this year to all meet up again.

**Summer Vacation from July 16<sup>th</sup> to August 26<sup>th</sup>**



### Our New IWA –BS Community on Facebook

A while ago, we installed a new option to get in touch with other IWA members via Facebook, the 'IWA-BS Community Group'. This is FOR US, FROM US – for members only!

It offers an easy way to get together, meet up spontaneously and have fun. It's a closed group, so it's accessible to members only and you'll find it on Facebook under **IWA-BS Community**. We invite all members to join and share with us their proposals for activities, perhaps to go to the cinema together (once that's possible again...) or go for a bicycle ride around Braunschweig... Whatever you'd like to do or suggest! This is the easiest way to find and quickly get in touch with like-minded people, join up and do things together.

Here's the direct link to our group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/542534779635903/?ref=share>

If you do not have a Facebook account, you can open one using your Email or mobile number and a password of your choice. And you do not need to post anything - you can just join in and see what's going on with the IWA-BS. If you'd like some help, please contact Ute, Diana, Kerstin or Paula.

Have fun with the IWA Facebook Community!

Kind regards from the Steering Committee

Web: [iwa-bs.de](http://iwa-bs.de)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/iwabraunschweig/](https://facebook.com/iwabraunschweig/)  
Instagram: [instagram.com/iwa\\_bs.de](https://instagram.com/iwa_bs.de)

### General Information

Please note that the ongoing, regular programme does not continue during the school holidays. Also, the IWA-BS will be officially closed during the holidays. Please note that e-mails and requests will not be answered until after the holidays.

#### Postal address of the IWA-BS

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Germersheimstr. 13a  
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#### IBAN NR

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VOLKSWAGEN BANK GMBH

**Please note that dates for the termination of a membership are June 30<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.**

#### **Newsletter Team (Impressum)**

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Please note that we have taken great care to make sure that all information at the time of printing was correct but we can accept no liability for mistakes or printing errors.

As always, we would appreciate any input and ideas for future publications. Anything that you think is important to you. Please inform me (Susanne.Kendell@t-online.de) of any suggestions.

Thank you!