



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

Dear IWA-BS members,

Well, it has been quite a year – and I am not only talking about the weather! There is change in the air everywhere and it will be very interesting to see what the year 2019 will bring and in what direction it will all develop – politically, economically and privately for us all. We will keep our fingers crossed.....

But now a look into the last few months and what we have been up to:

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of September Martina Sawalsky organised another culinary event in the Autostadt in Wolfsburg. 10 of our members tried their hands at (amongst other delights) filled chicken legs Italian style and chestnut puree. Thanks to Martina for arranging all this and looking after our troupe!

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September we attended (already an IWA tradition) a performance at the Kultur im Zelt which you can read about later on in a separate article.

I arranged another Couples' Night at the new Harry's winebar on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October which 14 people signed up for and only 4 turned up on the evening!!! Very disappointing but the 2 couples and the two of us still had a lovely and enjoyable evening with excellent wines and nice nibbles.

On Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of November our annual Cross Cooking Event took place. A huge event which is loved by everyone! Please find out more about it later on in the newsletter!

A day after on the Saturday, our member Karina Glenewinkel invited us to hear the concert of 'her' gospel choir. I have written about this choir before and they really are incredible. This year they celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and they lived it up with a concert looking back on 25 years of performances (including pictures projected on a large screen) and a party afterwards. 7 of our members joined them and 2 of them partied until 3 a.m. with the rest of the choir and their fans. The DJ was meant to have been fantastic and well worth staying for.... Thanks again to Sabina, Peirong and Sunshine who filled in for me that evening as I unfortunately had to work and wasn't able to join them.

Another tradition in the IWA is our annual Christmas float at the Christmas market in Braunschweig which this year took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December and was organised by Martina Sawalsky: Although the weather was not particularly christmassy (at 13 degrees!) the 14 IWA Ladies and the 1 man had a great time chatting and enjoying the drinks served to them ( and not having to queue for anything - how great is that???).

Well, when you are reading this edition of our newsletter, our IWA-BS Christmas Party will have already been and gone. And so the year 2018 slowly comes to an end. I so hope that you will all enjoy the pre-Christmas season and the cold (we had to wait a long time for it this year).

Don't go mad spending lots of money on presents but give time, love and memories instead. It is the time of the year to remember what is important to us and for me that is definitely spending time with people I like and love – something that I very often don't have enough time for. That is one of the many reasons why the IWA is so important – spending time with people who think alike and have a similar background to ourselves. Something very precious that a lot of people in the IWA work very hard for. So here an enormous thank you to everyone who has this last year contributed to the IWA and created wonderful memories for all of us.

Have a fabulous Christmas and a happy start into the New Year 2019!

Susanne Kendell

## Inside this Issue

What has the IWA-BS been up to?	1
My name is....	2
Cross Cultural Cooking	3
Stollen Baking Kultur im Zelt	4
IWA Helps - Erzähl Café	5
Finding Our New Home	6
One last Thought	7
Upcoming IWA -BS Events General Information	8





*International Women's Association*

*Region Braunschweig e.V.*

Newsletter 48

December 2018

My name is ...

Gwyneth Jones

How and Why I came to Braunschweig?

If you had told me when I was a girl that one day I would live in Braunschweig, I would have been very surprised! The only reason I had heard of Braunschweig was that one of the Hanoverian kings of England was married to a lady called Caroline of Brunswick. When he became king, he gave instructions that she was not to be admitted to his coronation, so it was clearly not a love-match! Where it was and what kind of a place it was, I could not have told you.

I spent most of my working life in Gravesend, which is in Kent, about an hour's journey south of London. My daughter went to school there and I worked for the local library service. After school my daughter studied Librarianship at Aberystwyth in West Wales, not far from where I grew up. When she completed her studies she announced that she wanted to work abroad for a year, to see what it was like. She went to Berlin, where she met and fell in love with a very nice German, and never came home! This gave me a new holiday destination, and lots of new places to explore. I visited about once a year and decided I'd better try to learn some German, so as to be able to communicate with the other half of the family. Braunschweig was still nowhere on the horizon, although we visited the Spreewald and Saalfeld, my son-in law's home-town.

However, a few years later, my son-in-law was offered a new job here in Braunschweig and finally, here they were! I now visited Braunschweig, and liked it very much. Eventually, after I retired, I decided that it would be very nice to be nearer to the rest of the family.

We talked things over and as they had to be here, because of work and school, I was the one to move.

I hate moving! Each time I do it, I hope it will be the last time, so the actual move was a little stressful. My daughter helped and supported me and gave up a lot of her holiday during the year leading up to the big event. After being here for two and a half years, I'm no longer a new girl. Life is much more stimulating and my new home is just round the corner from my family, so we see each other often instead of talking on the telephone once a week. My best friend and my brother and sister-in-law have been to visit and I hope for more visits from friends and family in the future. There are plenty of new experiences I'd like to share with them and people I'd like them to meet.



Pictures: IWA's Members



## Cross Cultural Cooking

I'm still stuffed. On Friday, November 16, more than 20 of us met at the International School Braunschweig-Wolfsburg for the Cross Cultural Cooking event. For those of you who have not yet been able to join this annual IWA favourite: it's an evening of treats and indulgence and wonderful fun – but absolutely not designed for delicate stomachs!

The chefs of the evening were:

Cristina Sobotschinski:	Mexican Cooking
Paula Schnackenberg:	American Cooking
Fara Dakkak:	Syrian Cooking
Mimi Schlüter:	Indonesian Cooking

Each chef and their assigned helpers created two courses for a total of eight: two starters, two entrees, two mains and two desserts. The four groups focused on their assigned cooking tasks, the goal being for everybody to be able to sit down together and then to keep the courses coming. Like I said: definitely not one for weak stomachs! But what varied culinary delights we enjoyed... Each course was explained by the respective chef and then the room would turn quiet and the clinking of cutlery was the only sound to be heard.



Now this is definitely the "premier class" of IWA events, the one which by far requires the greatest amount of planning, preparation, negotiation and logistics! By the time the participants arrive and head to one of the four kitchen cubicles, innumerable hours have already been spent by the organizational team. Thank you to the four master chefs of the evening and a great big Thank You to Martina Sawalsky, Heide-Marie Marzinke and Blanca Zenteno for all your time and effort and for treating us to a very special and memorable culinary experience!

Stephanie Cattell





*International Women's Association*  
*Region Braunschweig e.V.*

Newsletter 48

December 2018

## Stollen Baking

In our family it's a Christmas tradition to bake Stollen. My grandmother taught my mother and so did she: teaching me to bake the Stollen. When I moved to the US, I baked my Stollen right before the 1. Advent like in Germany.

Friends who tasted the Stollen wanted to know how to do it. So I started inviting a group of women between Thanksgiving and the 1. Advent to bake Stollen and to have a cheerful evening with some nibbles and wine. Moving back to Germany I missed this special evening a lot. After becoming a member of IWA I now can not only stick to my family tradition, but also to the new tradition:

Baking the Christmas Stollen with friends!

Andrea Jagla



Pictures: IWA's Members

## Kultur im Zelt

Braunschweig was again hosting the festival "Kultur im Zelt" in August and September. I was lucky to get a ticket for the "Rebel Comedy Show" at the end of the festival, joining a table with IWA ladies and their husbands.

Hany, Pu, Usus and Babak, young guys with an oriental background, but pointing out repeatedly, that they have German Passports, played sketches of everyday situations in their lives in Germany. They did that with amazing puns, grimaces and tomfoolery, music and rap. I had to hold my belly laughing when they made parodies of conversations with Germans in busses, supermarkets, or funnier still, asking the future father-in-law for the hand of his daughter. Reactions of Turkish and German parents were not so different and equally funny!

The audience was laughing their heads off when the guys explained how they tell their Turkish grandparents about the way of live here in Germany.

It was really unexpected, that the evening was not tomfoolery only. Babak presented a poem about an old immigrant who is totally helpless and lost in our society. Very touching.

Nevertheless, it was a very amusing evening, and I am looking forward to this festival again in 2019.

Ina Müller



Pictures: de.Wikipédia





## IWA-HELPS\* Refugees welcome! Deutschunterricht – Nachhilfe – Erzähl-Café

“Guten Tag. Wie geht es dir?“ When Ali, Mohammad, Assaad or Hala (just to name a few) meet with us (either for the German class, for “Nachhilfe” or for the “Erzähl-Café”) they always walk up to us, shake hands, give us a big smile and say this introductory phrase very proudly in German. What else can you do but smile back ?

Every Monday morning we meet with a group of refugees to help them learn the German language – which is not easy as we all know. Since 2015 IWA-Helps offers German classes to refugees once a week. Some of them are new in Germany and therefore absolute beginners, some of them have been in Braunschweig for a couple of months, some of them for years. It is quite a challenge for the IWA-Helps team to meet the different needs but by splitting the learners into different groups, we manage quite well.

In addition, some of the refugees take classes in German at different institutions in Braunschweig. They asked us at the beginning of the year whether we could also offer extra classes (“Nachhilfe”) to help them with their preparation for their B1 exams. Even though it was not so easy to set up this extra programme we managed quite well thanks to Maria who joined the IWA-Helps team. The new course took place once a week at the Intercultural Garden. It was quite impressive that so many refugees showed up in the afternoon – even during the holidays and despite the hot weather. But it was worth it. And as a side note: Some of our students passed their exams successfully.

From April to October the Intercultural Garden is also the place where IWA-Helps meets with the refugees for the “Erzähl-Café”. The Intercultural Garden is a project that was started by the city of Braunschweig and is now run by Roots e.V. (<https://www.gartenfreunde-braunschweig.de/roots-e-v>).

IWA-Helps supports the programme with its “Erzähl-Café” once a month. The idea is to talk in German without any focus on grammar, but to practice the German language in an unstressful environment. During the first hour we simply chat about everything and anything. The rest of the afternoon we cook together – either German food or dishes from one of the many countries the refugees come from. Of course peeling potatoes, cutting vegetables and cooking together also gives room for many interesting conversations. And in the end the food is always soooo delicious!!! The highlight this year was “Chicken on a bottle” – and we made not only one in the oven, but five. Yumm.

During the winter months the Erzähl-Café moves downtown to the Büro für Migrationsfragen in Auguststraße, We are allowed to use the conference room for free. Of course there is coffee, tea and cakes to live up to the name of our meeting. Instead of cooking (which of course is not possible in a conference room) we spend the second half of the afternoon with playing games. The absolute favourite game among the refugees (and us!) is Yenga. It's quite amazing how you can capture everybody's attention with this simple game. It definitely creates a very positive excitement and is always in for a good laugh when the tower tumbles down in the end.

Kirstin Jebautzke

\*Yvonne Böhle-Grob, Maria de Fatima Arruda v Oliveira, Dietlind Gutacker, Kirstin Jebautzke, Hannelore Kraft, Ina Müller, Martina Sawalsky, Sabine Westphal





## Finding Our New Home



This may be a first. I have been told I am the first male member of IWA. A distinction I am very proud to hold.

Our journey to Braunschweig began in late 2017 when my partner, David, was approached about taking an assignment in a town in northern Germany – called Braunschweig. The only thing we knew about Braunschweig was that it was David's grandmother's favorite wurst.

We have both been privileged to have had work and holiday opportunities that have taken us all over the world where we have loved experiencing different cultures. Because of our sense of adventure, we have always wanted to live outside of the United States. To many, this thought conjures up the hustle-and-bustle of London, or the quiet of Sienna, but for us, it meant something new entirely. We have had the good fortune to spend many a wonderful day exploring Europe, but this was one part of the continent we had not explored.

Our first exploratory trip was in late October last year on a typical day. You know the type. Kind of gray, and it got dark so early. Since it was between summer and the Christmas Market, there weren't many people on the streets. We were afraid Mutter Habenicht's was the only restaurant in town, but we thought the Dom and the squares were charming. And, since I love to cook, and we saw a grocery store, we figured it would not be Wiener Schnitzel every night.

Negotiations took longer than we thought, so we did not set out for our new life until June. This meant several trips back and forth to get our residence permits, but, more importantly, to find a place to live. This was more of a challenge than we expected, because it was not just the two of us. We were bringing our beloved miniature Schnauzer, Ziegler, along with us. Not everyone wants to rent a flat to Americans with a dog, but we found the perfect flat in the perfect location.

Ziegler had gotten his paperwork from the US Department of Agriculture, and we had 10 days to leave the country. Moving day was set for June 3<sup>rd</sup>. This involved an overnight flight to Frankfurt with Ziegler in the cabin. An intrepid flyer, Ziegler settled in under the seat and slept the entire flight. No one knew he was on board. In fact, no one stopped us at all. With no one at the "Goods to Declare" section, he arrived with little fanfare. The only problem we had was that we packed a bag of his dog food in a box that we shipped. Big mistake. After an international incident, we finally received the box (minus the dog food), so he made the transition to the new German brand quicker than planned.

The first weeks here were a struggle. David traveled nearly every week (something neither of us had predicted), so I ended up spending a lot of time with no one to talk to except Ziegler. Braunschweigers have a reputation for not being overly friendly, and early on we found this to be true.

We were also very surprised by the summer heat. Coming from Houston where our garages are air-conditioned, we kept checking to see if the power had gone out and calling to see if there was a nice, air-conditioned hotel nearby. Failing that, we learned how to manage windows, fans and shutters. Ziegler suffered the heat the most, so one of David's office colleagues found a blue "cooling mat" that helped him through the summer. In July, he turned 17.

After a couple of months of feeling fairly isolated, I was introduced to the IWA by someone that will be a life-long friend. There was some debate about whether a male spouse could become a member, but fortunately the answer was yes. I was concerned that I might change the dynamic of the group, but, from the first Happy Hour I attended, I felt right at home. In addition to making wonderful new friends, we have been introduced to many cultural events that were so much a part of our lives in the US.

We traveled back to Houston for a friend's wedding in late October. I was looking forward to going home to see good friends and familiar places. I spent 10 days. As I boarded the flight back, though, I realised that I was happy to be returning home – this time to Braunschweig.

John Drewer



## One Last Thought...."Seasonal Procrastination"

By the time you read this, the dates and events of the festive season will hopefully have worked their annual magic on me. At the moment, however, mid-November and with a mild 13 degrees outside, I've only just arrived in autumn and I'm not yet ready to move on. Once again, I'm shaking my head at what seems to me a very premature display of Christmas cheer.

Why this mental delay? Let me back-paddle a bit: the unbelievably summery summer of 2018 spread its antennae so far into the calendrical autumn that we mentally remained in summer mode and just kept doing what we'd been doing since April: mixing late-afternoon cocktails, followed by al-fresco dining, followed by philosophising the evening away with a chilled glass of Chardonnay. I'm convinced my husband and I have never spent so many evenings in a row chatting away. We discussed ALL global and personal issues, solved the odd crisis and planned holidays up until 2022 in addition to scheduling all upcoming house and garden DIY-jobs. Oh, how efficient.

All of a sudden, it was late October, and we reluctantly moved from the garden to the living room. The trick-or-treaters were already looming around the corner and I felt cheated out of a season. Autumn being my very favourite, I was deeply distressed to find that the shops had pretty much skipped orangey/autumnal decorations and gone straight to the red and green! Can you believe it? 20 degrees outside and lights, baubles and Rudolph inside? Ho, ho, ho indeed!

My two-week-long shaking of the head (only on the inside of course...) from late October until now brings me to my current situation. As I said, it's mid-November. I'm finally starting to get my head around the holidays being in fast approach. In order to dive into the preparations which the season requires, all things weather must be ignored. After all, those advent calendars are not going to assemble themselves; neither will advent wreaths nor presents appear out of thin air and suddenly waft down from above. What a shame. Once again, I've procrastinated too long and will have to pay the price by making up for time lost in the jam-packed weeks to come. But thank goodness there will soon be Glühwein and Eierpunsch! That will definitely help... An hour or two at the Christmas market and I'll be grabbed by inspiration and whiz through my lists while happily humming "Jingle Bells".

I blame global warming. It's truly messing with my head. I honestly cannot be expected to deal with seasonal activities and decorations in such un-seasonal conditions. I have no idea how these Californians or Australians do it ("it" meaning Christmas...) in constant heat and sunshine. But of course they're used to these temperatures! The unsuspecting German, however, having grown up in a climate zone where, weather-wise, seasons used to be more reliable, truly struggles when the months of the year do not adhere to experience and empirical values! Our "hundred year summer" followed by a "hundred year autumn" followed by a Christmas barbecue?

That will require quite a bit of Glühwein...

Stephanie Cattell



Pictures:: [baraberto.com](http://baraberto.com)



Pictures: [AccuWeather.com](http://AccuWeather.com)



International Women's Association  
Region Braunschweig e.V.

Newsletter 48

December 2018

## Upcoming events

## General Information

### **Christmas Markets in the Region**

Following you will find the opening dates for our local Christmas markets:

Braunschweig	28.11. – 29.12.
Wolfenbuettel	27.11. – 23.12.
Goslar	28.11. – 30.12.
Hanover	28.11. – 22.12.
Wolfsburg	30.11. – 29.12.
Wolfsburg Autostadt	30.11. – 06.01.

Some historical sites in the area also hold very special Christmas Markets and exhibitions. The next few are definitely worth going to. Please note that some of those charge an entrance fee...

Schloss Salder	15./16.12.
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Including illuminations and a market for young kids

Cloister Woeltingerode	8./9.12
Schloss Oelber	7. – 9.12. and 14. – 16.12.
Rammelsberg	16.12. from 11.00 – 17.00 hours

Experience a slightly different Christmas market underground at the Unesco heritage site of the old mine Rammelsberg.

Please purchase tickets for this beforehand as it is always very popular



**NEW**

### **“WELCOME TO GERMANY“ GROUP FOR NEW LANDED WOMEN**

If you are coming to Braunschweig to live for the first time, relocating can be a lonely and challenging time. At the IWA we would like to extend a warm welcome in English and Spanish to new members from overseas, with the offer of friendship, support, cultural exchange and activities encompassing the very best of what the region of Braunschweig has to offer. See you in February 2019!

Claudia Metzkat

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.

### **Christmas Holidays from the 24.12. - 04.01.19**

#### Postal address of the IWA-BS

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#### IBAN NR

DE54270200006800045350  
VOLKSWAGEN BANK GMBH

**Please note that dates for the termination of a membership are March 31<sup>st</sup> and October 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!