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# GS News

Sept.  
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The Newsletter of the Chartered Institute of  
Linguists German Society e.V.

## Letter from the Chair

Dear Members,

Twenty five years after the first study weekend in Weimar we returned there to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the German Society. We were delighted to welcome CIOL Council member Judith Ridgway, and we even had some of the original Weimar participants. I would like to thank Jadwiga and Sally for organising such an excellent event. Everybody enjoyed themselves and there were no problems, apart from the usual minor details such as Deutsche Bahn's rail replacement service. My trains were all on time so I can't complain. A full report is on page 4.

Our next event is the Translators' Workshop on 5<sup>th</sup> November in Berlin, and there are still some free places. No fireworks but some very interesting presentations. The details are on page 8.

In 2017 our first event will be the AGM on 4<sup>th</sup> March in Mainz, and I hope that it will be well attended. Since many members live along the Rhine, it will be a nice day out, and you don't even have to celebrate the carnival as we've chosen the first weekend of Lent!

Planning is in full swing for the 2017 study weekend in Lübeck. The dates have not been finalised but it will probably be in the first half of September. The topic is relations between the Hanseatic League and the UK. More details will be announced in a future newsletter and will also be on the website.

Finally, my daughters have introduced me to the delights of Duolingo, which is a free language learning app for smart phones and tablets but can also be played on the computer. For refreshing half-forgotten languages or trying something new I can only recommend it. A warning – it can get quite addictive!

All the best from me and the committee

**Stephanie**

## Reaching Your Audience – Anglophoner Tag 2016

This year's Anglophoner Tag (1-3 July) was hosted by ATICOM and took place in Düsseldorf. The overarching theme was 'Reaching Your Audience', and to get us into the mood the weekend kicked off with a guided tour of the WDR broadcasting studios. We were given a fascinating glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes (in some cases literally) of the radio and television programmes that are broadcast from these studios. As they are located in Düsseldorf's 'media harbour', we were subsequently treated to an entertaining architectural tour of this district of Düsseldorf that tastefully combines the old with the new. Then it was off to a Kölsch (Cologne beer!) pub and restaurant for some serious networking.

Early next morning we were nevertheless all present and correct at the 'FFFZ' conference centre. Reiner Heard, ATICOM's chairman, welcomed us and introduced the first speaker, Brigitte Geddes from ITI, whose talk was entitled 'Pitch Perfect' and was based on her thoughts and observations over a very long and varied career. She wondered why wouldn't you make sure that you find the right word – *le mot juste* – if this is what people are paying you for. She then went on to describe the pitfalls that can get in the way of this and the lateral thinking that is required to enable you to be pitch perfect. She emphasised that translators should not undersell themselves. After all, their task is to reinvent a text in another language. Over the years Brigitte has been inspired by various people, including Chris Durban, translator and author of the 'Prosperous Translator'. Brigitte concluded that trying to be pitch perfect will always be a challenge, and the key is to remain flexible and adaptable.

Next up was Isabel Schwagereit, who is the expert on standards at ATICOM. Her presentation was in German and started with a question: 'Wer profitiert von Übersetzungs- und Dolmetschnormen?' After a brief survey of the latest standards, e.g. ISO 17100 (requirements for translation services), Isabel discussed the potential benefits, both internal and external, for freelance translators that can be derived from adhering to official standards. These included better and more transparent processes as well as marketing advantages. For translation customers trying to select service providers, the standards are viewed as additional criteria but by no means the only ones. Isabel concluded that while standards are not a panacea, they do not do any harm. She finished with an appropriate quote from Aristotle to illustrate her point: "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination."

In the last presentation of the morning, Nick Tanner, ITI/CloL, whetted our appetites with a talk and some practical exercises on 'Jamie in German', referring of course to the cheeky chappy and naked chef Jamie Oliver. Nick presented his analysis of Jamie's style in his cookbooks, including a comparison with Delia Smith and Johann Lafer, her opposite number in Germany, and also with Chakall, who looks as cheeky as Jamie. After a review of the macro-structures, syntactic patterns, stylistic forms and discourse in the various cookery books, Nick then talked about the German translations of Jamie's cookery books, which are very popular in Germany. Nick highlighted the various challenges here for translators, including imprecise amounts of ingredients, e.g. "a good sprinkling of cheese" and copious use of colloquial words and phrases, e.g. "old dude". Moreover, the text is also punctuated throughout with Jamie's personality and opinions. We were all then given an opportunity to translate Jamie's 'mould-breaking' texts, as Nick referred to them, and we shared the results of our efforts.

After yet more networking over a delicious lunch, Barbara Müller-Grant, BDÜ, led a thought provoking interactive session entitled: “*Is it appropriate to tailor the message to your audience?*” To get the discussion going, Barbara asked whether this would be appropriate in a typical court setting where the defendant is from Africa and the official language is English. Is it appropriate to ‘dumb down’, or tailor a very complex message when interpreting? The conclusion was that it would not be appropriate, as this would involve taking out information and becoming personally involved. Barbara then asked if interpreters should use body language if the defendants used it. The preferred option in this case is not to use it. The next hypothetical situation focused on whether or not a vulgarity/profanity should be translated in a meeting where the manager of a US subsidiary of a German company wishes to be present, but not necessarily take part, in order to ascertain if the company’s message is getting across. The conclusion was yes – everything has to be translated. However, Barbara did point out that we need to be braver and bolder when translating advertising copy, texts in the field of the theatre and the performing arts, literary texts and even technical manuals, although that should be agreed in advance.

Reiner Heard, our host for the day, then took to the floor to provide an update on machine translation (MT) and, in particular, what users think about it. While MT has a long and largely unsuccessful history (stretching back around 60 years), at present the conditions are changing rapidly and large amounts of money are being invested in this area. Recent developments have to do with something called singularity, which is based on the hypothesis that, at some point in the future, artificial intelligence will be so advanced that it will be able to take over tasks from humans – including translation. So-called neural MT based on ‘deep learning’ is on the way. Nevertheless, it will be extremely expensive. So what does the future hold for the translation industry? It is very likely that low-end texts will be handled capably by MT but the technology would not be financially viable for semantically challenging texts, e.g. literary or marketing and for languages of limited diffusion. If you would like to stay on top of developments in this area then take a look at the weekly newsletter on [www.slator.com](http://www.slator.com).

The final (fairly light-hearted) talk of the day was by Rodney Mantle and was on the topic of ‘World Englishes’, those localised or indigenised varieties of English with which we are very familiar in Germany. Rodney introduced us to the most influential model of the spread of English, created by Braj Kachru, where the diffusion of English is captured in terms of three concentric circles of the language. Rodney’s talk focused on the so-called ‘Expanding Circle’ that encompasses countries where English plays no historical or governmental role, but where it is nevertheless widely used as a medium of international communication, for example, in China. Rodney showed us many examples of Chinglish – a form of English that mixes elements of English with elements of Chinese – that he had collected during his many years of teaching in China. Naturally, no discussion of world Englishes would be complete without Denglish, and Rodney had plenty examples of that, too.

We rounded off yet another fascinating and stimulating Anglophoner Tag in a cosy restaurant in Kaiserswerth, and on the Sunday morning we had a tour of the State Parliament in Düsseldorf. The ITI German Network will be hosting the 2017 Anglophoner Tag but no details were available at the time of going to press.

## German Society Study weekend 2016

When the committee of the German Society planned the study weekend in Weimar, no-one could have dreamt that on a 10<sup>th</sup> of September the weather would be so hot and summery – but the 34 people (+ 3 speakers) attending agreed that this made a wonderful weekend just perfect.

Apart from plenty of opportunities to network over Thuringian food and drinks, the weekend offered the tried-and-tested mixture of stimulating talks, “touristy” activities and culture.

At registration, GS anniversary pens were handed out to those attending. The topic for the day was earlier British visitors to Weimar. The German Society chairperson Stephanie Tarling welcomed everyone, mentioning that almost exactly 25 years previously the very first study weekend had also been held in Weimar. The Cambridge Society, represented by 4 people, presented the GS with a box of wonderful, assorted biscuits, which found eager takers during the break - thank you!



The day's first speaker, Dr Ulrike Müller-Harang, a senior researcher from the Klassik Stiftung Weimar, painted an overall picture of late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Weimar, which was said to be “swarming with Englishmen”. One disgruntled German poet thought the town was suffering “from the English disease”. Some were students, or tourists; some, like Thomas Wilson, came as teachers, but for many visitors the “Goethe connection” was the reason to go to Weimar. Goethe's work was hugely admired by prominent British publishers and writers, including Sir Walter Scott. Goethe's first translator, Thomas Carlyle, never actually met the poet in person although they - and indeed a somewhat besotted Mrs Carlyle as well - corresponded frequently. Lord Leveson Gower also tried his hand at translation, but his “Faust” found no favour with Goethe, who barely recognized his original. Goethe was increasingly unwilling to attend receptions at his house personally, although some did manage to meet the great man. One was Henry Crabb Robinson, a solicitor, who read and discussed Byron and Milton with him. Another was the famous novelist William Makepeace Thackeray. One of the more colourful characters about town was James Marshall, who progressed, if not exactly from dishwasher to millionaire, at least from poor boy to self-tutored Privy Counsellor at the court of Weimar.

He was the go-to person for British visitors, including Lewes and George Eliot. As Germans like to think of the English as rather eccentric, Dr Müller-Harang gave some details of a prime example of this species - Mr John Horrocks. Despite his odd behaviour, he has a memorial stone in the wall of Weimar cemetery. He wrote the standard work "The art of fly fishing for trout and grayling in Germany and Austria" and was a vocal early environmentalist passionately concerned about the state of the River Ilm in Weimar and fisheries in general.

Robert Muscutt then picked up the thread and gave a lively presentation of the three months that George Eliot spent in Weimar. By the time she travelled to Weimar Mary Ann Evans was calling herself Marian Evans, but had not yet written the novels under the pseudonym George Eliot that were to make her famous. In an age of little freedom for women, she took the enormous risk of travelling with her lover, a married man named George Henry Lewes; in 1854 he was working on his biography of the recently deceased Goethe and was eager to interview people who had known him.

In London the couple had moved in radical intellectual circles and initially George Eliot noted in her journal, "How could Goethe live here, in this dull, lifeless village?" Soon, however, the Park by the Ilm exerted its charm on the "honeymooners". Moreover, they rapidly developed a friendship with Franz Liszt - then Weimar's most famous resident, a man with rock-star status and a dedicated, rapturous fan base. Liszt was openly living with a woman who was not his wife - and had done so before - but Weimar appears to have been less censorious than London. As George Eliot wrote of her own situation, "No-one here seems to find it scandalous that we should be together." The fascinating aspect was that not only, as we were later to discover on the afternoon walk with Bob Muscutt, were George Eliot's poetic descriptions of the Park still valid, but that we were meeting in the very room at the Altenburg villa where the "man of the house", Liszt, played the piano for his guests from England. Marian Evans wrote a very appreciative account of his mastery of the instrument and of visits to the house. She also paid tribute to the residents of Weimar, writing approvingly that, "Unlike our English people they take pleasure into their calculations and seem regularly to set aside part of their time to recreation." In retrospect she wrote, "If you care nothing at all about Goethe, Schiller and Herder, why, so much the worse for you - you will miss many interesting thoughts and associations; but still, Weimar has a charm independent of these great names." And that neatly sums up what the study week-end participants felt.

Bob Muscutt's sister Linda Mayne, joint treasurer of the George Eliot Fellowship, then gave her own, personal view of George Eliot, tracing the connections between members of her own family and events that happened in Eliot's lifetime and showing how the places in and around Nuneaton with which the young Mary Ann Evans was familiar found their way, sometimes only thinly disguised, into George Eliot's novels. It may have had little to do with Weimar as such, but Linda's enthusiasm and love of her topic certainly inspired several of us to resolve to go back to those books forced upon so many of us at school and read them in a fresh light.

This stimulating morning ended with a walk back into the town centre and a celebration 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary lunch at the Gasthaus zum Weißen Schwan - which has seen countless British visitors and German luminaries over its long history. Judith Ridgway, a member of the CIOL Council, spoke briefly before the meal and conveyed greetings from the CIOL, with congratulations on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the German Society. London also sent commemoration desk calendars and CIOL pens and post-it note booklets for everyone, which were very well received. To celebrate a birthday properly one needs a cake - and the GS had ordered one magnificently decorated with the official crest, a sweet birthday surprise to complement the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary pens distributed earlier in the day.





Those in the group who could manage a bit more culture attended the performance in the tiny, intimate theatre in the Cranach House on the market square. There a man and a woman talked about Goethe's relationship with Christiane Vulpius - one more scandal in Weimar society. A mixture of original letters, comments from contemporaries and historical details brought the two halves of this unequal partnership vividly alive - but it must be admitted that the great man was not really suited to normal married life.

A Sunday sightseeing tour and lunch rounded off the official portion of this highly successful study weekend.

PS. Plans are already being made for next year's event in Lübeck.

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Some people who attended the Weimar weekend were surprised to see the statue of Shakespeare in the park, so for those of you who missed Jadwiga's article the first time round, here's the answer.



### Shakespeare - Found in Translation

If, like me, you've ever wondered why there is a reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in Neuss, a small town on the Rhine, or why Shakespeare's death mask is

to be found in Darmstadt, the answer is simple – Shakespeare was German. At least, that is what Germans have felt for centuries. According to Professor Martin Swales, a former Professor of German at University College London (UCL), who gave a fascinating talk on this subject at the Shakespeare Festival in Neuss some years ago.

It was August Wilhelm Schlegel, one of the most famous and prolific early translators of Shakespeare's work, who described Shakespeare as being "ganz unser" (entirely ours). Indeed, many Germans believe that Shakespeare stands alongside Goethe and Schiller as the third German classic author. It is perhaps for this reason that in any given year there are more performances of Shakespeare in Germany than in England. Moreover, the first Shakespeare society in the world was founded in, you guessed it, Germany, in 1864.

Most significantly, however, German was the first language Shakespeare was ever translated into. This was way back in 1766, just 150 years after Shakespeare's death, with Christoph Martin Wieland's prose translation of 22 of the plays. Between 1818 and 1839 alone, eight separate German translations of the entire works of Shakespeare were published. Some have argued that this even helped to "improve" the German language, as new words had to be invented to complete the task.

Nevertheless, it was the Schlegel-Tieck edition of 1833 that is considered to have set the gold standard for Shakespeare translation and laid the foundations for successive generations of German writers to attempt their very own versions. As Professor Swales pointed out, this stream of translations is probably one of the reasons for Shakespeare's continued popularity in Germany - German audiences can actually understand the plays. By contrast, Shakespeare's original English is no longer easily understood.

Germans became enthusiastic about Shakespeare, and thus started to translate his works, as they were looking for an alternative to French classical drama which, many felt, had a paralysing influence on German theatre. Shakespeare's plays did not adhere to the classical unities of action, place and time, as was common practice in French theatre.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once described the unities of French theatre as being "as oppressive as prison." Thus, Shakespeare represented a breath of fresh air and offered a whole new world of creative possibilities. Indeed, Goethe was one of Shakespeare's greatest advocates. In 1771, he gave an impassioned speech on the merits of his "friend" across the North Sea. As Professor Rüdiger Görner points out in an afterword to a new translation of Goethe's speeches and writing on Shakespeare, Goethe even Germanized the Bard's name when he called him Schäkespeare.

However, the story doesn't end there. Not only do Germans think of Shakespeare as entirely theirs, Germany is considered to be personified by Hamlet. In 1844, the writer Ferdinand Freiligrath wrote a poem entitled "Germany is Hamlet," the thinker, the lingerer never acting. To top it all, Hamlet was a so-called "Wahldeutscher" (German resident by choice) as he was a student at Wittenberg University. So there! In an attempt to fight back, Professor Swales, asked his colleagues at UCL's English Department to name a Shakespearean character who they thought embodied Britain, the Bard's native country. The English Professors suggested Falstaff – I'll leave you to draw your own conclusions on that one.

**Jadwiga Bobrowska**

**2016 GS Translators' Workshop  
Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Berlin**

Further to the information given in our March newsletter, the final line-up of speakers is as follows:

Christin Dallmann	Einführung in die Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit
Ilse Freiburg	Internationale Befragungen – die Kunst, weltweit die richtigen Fragen richtig zu stellen
Alexandra Jones	Translating poetry (see also Editor's Rag Bag)
Isabelle Thormann	Her most spectacular court cases

Those who haven't yet registered but are still interested should contact Jadwiga now at [J.Bobrowska@gmx.net](mailto:J.Bobrowska@gmx.net) by no later than **30<sup>th</sup> September 2016**. Please note that the hotel contingent is being held until 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**The editor's rag bag**

Thanks to those who took the time to respond to our final newsletter opt-in appeal. Apart from saving time and money in future, we now know who does and who doesn't read the newsletter!

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Congratulations to Sandy Jones on the publication in June of her first collection of Scottish Gaelic poetry. It is entitled 'Crotal Ruadh – Red Lichen', and is a bilingual collection: three dozen poems, some of which Sandy has set to music as songs, with her own translations into English. For more details, please see <http://www.acairbooks.com/categories/all-products/crotal-ruadh.aspx>

In the foreword to the book, renowned Gaelic poet Aonghas MacNeacail wrote: 'It was clear that the idiom and meaning of poetry coursed through every piece of her writing that I read. Sandy has a well-judged touch for adding unusual, and sometimes witty or skittish twists to the concepts in the poetry.'

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### A light-hearted tale

The small town of Thetford in Norfolk is home to the Dad's Army Museum (*'Dad's Army'* was a highly popular UK TV comedy series, *Ed.*) and has a statue of Captain Mainwaring near the river.



The town is also home to an impressive equestrian statue of the last Maharajah of the Punjab, Duleep Singh.



He was deposed by the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and exiled to the UK. For a time, he lived near Thetford, and one of his sons bought an historic building and donated it to the town as a museum. Moreover, daughter Sophia became a suffragette.

On account of the Maharajah's ties with the area, many Sikhs visit Thetford. On one occasion, a friendly lady from the tourist office persuaded some of them to gather round the statue of Captain Mainwaring for a photo. Impressed, the Sikhs concluded that 'this must have been a great warrior!' How delighted 'Captain Mainwaring' would have been (actor Arthur Lowe too, by all accounts!).

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Thanks to Bob Muscutt for forwarding this gem, spotted on a t-shirt:

'Egal wie dicht du bist – Goethe war Dichter'

## **GS Diary**

**2016**

**19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

Frankfurt am Main book fair. Special guests The Netherlands and Flanders.

**5<sup>th</sup> November**

Translators' workshop in Berlin. For details, please see page 8.

**2017**

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March**

GS AGM in Mainz  
Details and agenda nearer the time.

**June/July**

Anglophoner Tag in the UK, to be organised by the ITI. More details in due course.

**September**

GS Study weekend in Lübeck. Further details in due course.