

Dear Members and Friends,

Towards the end of last year I was, frankly, rather depressed. I had returned mid-October from an epic and most enjoyable tour of Japan with Valentin, one of my young nephews. We spent the final days in Tokyo, in warm, sunny weather. By contrast Frankfurt was cold, wet and very grey. And the world was in poor shape: military stalemate and ongoing suffering in Ukraine; the horrific attack by Hamas on Israel on October 7th and its ghastly aftermath in Gaza; insecure (arguably incompetent) governments in many countries across the world; a huge election year looming (including a pivotal UK general election), with potential for some scary voting outcomes; not to mention global warming, recession, the cost of living crisis, strikes etc etc.

Since then, after a wonderful Christmas week with family and friends in Austria, and a relaxing New Year, I have cheered up a bit. Chancellor Scholz and Hessen's Prime Minister Rhein made reassuring, optimistic noises in their New Year speeches. Even the caustic Gabor Steingart ("The Pioneer Briefing") and other political, economic and business commentators have found some positive things to say about German, European and world prospects this year. Having said that, for me the jury on 2024 is still out.

Overall 2023 was a pretty good year for the DBG. Berlin was very active, holding all four Königswinter conferences (again, after a tricky phase due to Covid). Berlin also had a busy schedule of physical and online events. Several of us from other regional centres were regular participants at the latter. Besides the "Netzwerktreffen" in early December I especially appreciated the online "Report from Königswinter - Observations on the 73rd Königswinter Conference." Two key participants shared with us their impressions of the conference, entitled "The UK and Germany: Ready for the Challenges of 2024?", which I had been unable to attend. I think this is a good way to disseminate important Königswinter knowledge, insights and impact beyond the select physical audience. I hope it will be repeated in future years.

Continuing on Königswinter, the 2024 Defence conference will take place in April in London; the Main conference in early July at a location in the UK; the Young conference as usual in late July in Berlin; and the Economic conference in the 2nd half of 2024 at a location in Germany.

2023 was also a decent year for DBG Rhein-Main. Most of our events were hybrid, with both physical attendance at the Frankfurter PresseClub and online audiences from the FRM region, and other DBG regional centres, and occasionally from overseas. Many of our in-person speakers also gave talks at

**Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft Rhein Main e. V.**

**Geschäftsstelle:** c/o Mazars GmbH & Co. KG Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft Steuerberatungsgesellschaft • z. Hd. Frau Modersohn • Theodor-Stern-Kai 1 • 60596 Frankfurt am Main • Fax: 0 69 967 65-1165 - Tel.: 015165532181 • [www.debrige.de](http://www.debrige.de) • [DBG.Rhein-Main@DeBriGe.de](mailto:DBG.Rhein-Main@DeBriGe.de) • [dbg-rheinmain@t-online.de](mailto:dbg-rheinmain@t-online.de)

**Vorstand:** Nick Jefcoat (Vorsitzender) • Dr. Bernd-A. von Maltzan (stv. Vorsitzender) • Prof. Dr. Andreas Fahrmeir • Michael Gehrig (Geschäftsführer) • Prof. Dr. Christoph Heyl • Tobias Mackenrodt • Annika Müller de Vries • Hendrik Schmidt (Schatzmeister) • Dr. Jens Zimmermann

**Bankverbindung:** Deutsche Bank AG • Frankfurt a.M. • Konto 8068447 • BLZ 50070024 – IBAN DE71500700240806844700 • BIC DEUTDE33HAN

DBG Rhein-Neckar (Heidelberg) the following day. Attendance was mixed: sometimes active both physically and online; but on other occasions rather disappointing, especially in terms of in-person participation. We need to be able to continue attracting quality speakers, so I hope we can find ways to improve physical attendance going forward.

Among our events my personal favourites were:

- Two evenings at the Frankfurter Goethe-Museum in the first half of 2023, in cooperation with the Freies Deutsches Hochstift, on German lyric poetry and Shakespeare's First Folio (the original collection of his plays). This is a wonderful format which we will again adopt in 2024 and beyond.
- Later in the year, talks by very knowledgeable and entertaining speakers on "In Search of the Origins of Matter" and the "Kindertransport" of German-Jewish children to the UK just before WWII.
- I also really enjoyed the outdoor performance of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Schlosshotel Kronberg in late June and our Late Summer Party in early September. I hope we will be able to hold such events regularly from now on.

Michael Gehrig has once more compiled an impressive programme for 2024. In the first few months we will have a visit to the English Theatre in late January to see the new play "Kindertransport"; a talk on the Romantic movement in February; one on the UK Young Film sector in March; and a Shakespeare evening in cooperation with the Freies Deutsches Hochstift at the Goethe-Museum in April. Further events on British-German relations, politics and science will follow later in the year.

Thank you again, dear Michael, not only for arranging these events, but also for your excellent work for the DBG throughout the past decades!

Our membership again remained reasonably stable in 2023. And, especially given rising income on the bond investments in our portfolio, DBG R-M's financial position going into 2024 continues to be sound.

My choice of poem this time reflects my mood of late last year. But "The Second Coming" by the early 20th century Irish poet William Butler Yeats, besides being a great poem, remains very relevant and, indeed, highly topical today. (*Extracts* from this 1919 poem below.) In the turmoil after WW I, and anticipating some kind of new world order, Yeats was mainly thinking about religion and a likely post-Christian new era. In the current turmoil, and from a more political and social perspective, things are also falling apart; the centre is weakening, too; so let us hope that we can avoid mere anarchy!

**Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft Rhein Main e. V.**

**Geschäftsstelle:** c/o Mazars GmbH & Co. KG Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft Steuerberatungsgesellschaft • z. Hd. Frau Modersohn • Theodor-Stern-Kai 1 • 60596 Frankfurt am Main • Fax: 0 69 967 65-1165 - Tel.: 015165532181 • [www.debrige.de](http://www.debrige.de) • [DBG.Rhein-Main@DeBriGe.de](mailto:DBG.Rhein-Main@DeBriGe.de) • [dbg-rheinmain@t-online.de](mailto:dbg-rheinmain@t-online.de)

**Vorstand:** Nick Jefcoat (Vorsitzender) • Dr. Bernd-A. von Maltzan (stv. Vorsitzender) • Prof. Dr. Andreas Fahrmeir • Michael Gehrig (Geschäftsführer) • Prof. Dr. Christoph Heyl • Tobias Mackenrodt • Annika Müller de Vries • Hendrik Schmidt (Schatzmeister) • Dr. Jens Zimmermann

**Bankverbindung:** Deutsche Bank AG • Frankfurt a.M. • Konto 8068447 • BLZ 50070024 – IBAN DE71500700240806844700 • BIC DEUTDE33HAN

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,*

*The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

*“Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,*

*And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?”*

The parallels are striking. Populist political leaders and their followers are full of passionate intensity. Besides the alarming possibility of a political “Second Coming” in the USA, there are worrying potential “First Comings” in other countries including (following the example of the Netherlands) France and Austria. And the idea of a rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem resonates strongly in this period of horror in the Middle East.

I am not familiar with Yeats’s later poetry. Apparently, however, it is notable for courage and defiance in the face of loss and adversity. So let’s follow the poet’s example, remain positive and proceed with a brave face through the months ahead!

Thank you as always, dear Members, for your continued support throughout 2023. As for you, dear Friends, I hope that many of you will now decide to take up membership.

I wish you all the best for 2024!

Nick Jefcoat  
Chairman  
DBG R-M  
11.01.2024

**Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft Rhein Main e. V.**

**Geschäftsstelle:** c/o Mazars GmbH & Co. KG Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft Steuerberatungsgesellschaft • z. Hd. Frau Modersohn • Theodor-Stern-Kai 1 • 60596 Frankfurt am Main • Fax: 0 69 967 65-1165 - Tel.: 015165532181 • [www.debrige.de](http://www.debrige.de) • [DBG.Rhein-Main@DeBriGe.de](mailto:DBG.Rhein-Main@DeBriGe.de) • [dbg-rheinmain@t-online.de](mailto:dbg-rheinmain@t-online.de)

**Vorstand:** Nick Jefcoat (Vorsitzender) • Dr. Bernd-A. von Maltzan (stv. Vorsitzender) • Prof. Dr. Andreas Fahrmeir • Michael Gehrig (Geschäftsführer) • Prof. Dr. Christoph Heyl • Tobias Mackenrodt • Annika Müller de Vries • Hendrik Schmidt (Schatzmeister) • Dr. Jens Zimmermann

**Bankverbindung:** Deutsche Bank AG • Frankfurt a.M. • Konto 8068447 • BLZ 50070024 – IBAN DE71500700240806844700 • BIC DEUTDE33HAN