

A royal jojojo hoho

I would like to welcome my dear friends of the traditional carnival culture to our great European Cultural and Customs Meeting. I feel very proud to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our association from the 14th until the 17th of February 2019 with 34 other groups and guilds from 13 different European countries in my hometown of Altstätten.

Local artist Josef Ebnöther created the motif for the anniversary celebration. It shows a Röllelibutz with many visitors from near and far.

The Röllelibutzen Association, now known throughout the world of carnival was founded in 1919. The following year our association received its first flag, which one can admire today in the Prestegg Museum. One can not only see the first flag, but also the Röllelibutzen figure in the Prestegg Museum. Another figure stands in the carnival museum in Binche, Belgium, and a third one in "Narrenschopf" in Bad Dürkheim, Swabia.

Today the association consists of about 75 members aged between the years of 15 and 85. The Röllelibutzen and "Ehrendamen"- the maids of honour, not only meet for carnival events nationally and internationally, but also lead a lively club life with gatherings, excursions, rehearsals of polonaises etc. throughout the year. The association, which has been managed since 100 years by a committee, has a president called the "Butzenkönig". A specially appointed committee is responsible for the organisation of the Altstätter street carnival, which takes place during the most wonderful days of the year, from "Dirty Thursday", which is entirely dedicated to the children, until "Carnival Tuesday".

In the course of the association's history, the Röllelibutzen and the maids of honour have visited many processions nationally and internationally and have participated in various "Narrentreffen" or fool meetings. Many members especially remember the unforgettable performances in the USA, France, Belgium and in the carnival strongholds of Germany. In addition, the Röllelibutzen Association also performed at many cultural events outside the carnival season as a representative of the canton of St. Gallen and the city of Altstätten.

The Röllelibutzen Association is extremely thankful and grateful to be able to take on the role as the host during the European Cultural and Customs Meeting from the 14th until the 17th of February 2019. Firstly, I would like to thank the canton of St. Gallen, the city of Altstätten, the school authorities of Altstätten and the local and regional industries.

I would also like to thank our guests from Switzerland and Europe, who did not dread travelling thousands of kilometres to celebrate with us here in Altstätten and to show us their customs. I wish you a good journey back home with best impressions of the jubilee events, of our attractive region and with cheerful encounters with the other participants of the carnival procession.

Last, but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to the organising committee of the cultural and customs festival and its president Alex Zenhäusern, the committee of the Röllelibutzen Association, all members and the many volunteers without whom the festival would have not been possible. A further big thank you goes to Andreas Winet, who arranged and established contacts to many European carnival groups for us.

I am looking forward to our anniversary celebrations and I wish you all unforgettable hours in our beautiful town.

Carlo Pinardi

Butzenkönig and President of the Röllelibutzen Association Altstätten