

30 YEARS DRESDEN TRUST: CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH 14TH FEBRUARY 2023

Your Royal Highness, Minister-President, Ambassador, dear guests: the Trustees of The Dresden Trust are honoured that you are with us today to celebrate our 30th anniversary. Ambassador, we much appreciate your generous hosting – and your friendship.

The Trust was set up in response to a “Call from Dresden” to help restore the ruined city. Our founders realised this was a moment for the British to help heal the wounds of war, and for many it also meant *making amends* to the people of Dresden. We will never forget the terrible slaughter and destruction inflicted by the bombing of 1945. The Trust raised over £1 million for rebuilding the Frauenkirche, and commissioned a London goldsmith to craft the Golden Orb and Cross which stand on top.

As a result of this gesture, and the warm reception it received in Dresden, today when Britons go to the city they are received with friendship, which understandably was not always the case before.

Now, at this time in particular, we feel we should *strengthen* the bridges we have built – and walk on them. We have reinforced our *Dresden Scholars Scheme*, which enables German pupils to attend British schools, and arranges for British children to go to schools in Dresden and stay with local families. The British youngsters come back talking enthusiastically of “life-changing experiences.”

Together with the Frauenkirche and a local school, we are developing an interactive historical awareness project for Dresden children. We also sponsor *cultural initiatives*. Our Trustee Daniel Schieferdecker helped inaugurate one of them yesterday at the Kulturpalast in Dresden. He has made his way back to be with us in London today.

Your Royal Highness, you have accompanied us as a Patron since the very early days. Your involvement motivated the British people to support us. In 2004, you travelled to Dresden to formally hand over Trust's Golden Orb and Cross, which was hoisted to the top of the restored Frauenkirche. Eleven years later, I watched you receive the Dresden Peace Prize in the Semper Opera House, earning a *long, standing ovation* from the citizens of Dresden.

Three years ago, on the 75th anniversary of the bombing, you stood there once again, in the icy wind and spitting rain, hand in hand with Germany's President, Minister-President Kretschmer and the Mayor of Dresden, in a *Human Chain* of solidarity around the historic city centre.

Your Royal Highness, without you we would never have achieved what we did, and you continue to inspire us today. If I may be so bold, Sir, I would say that what you have done for The Dresden Trust and friendly relations with Germany represents a *great personal achievement*. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you!

Marcus Ferrar

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