



Dr. Friedrich Reiss in Portales, New Mexico, 1980. (Photo courtesy of Mary and Jim Sublette)

In Memory of Friedrich Reiss

(24 December 1937 – 17 August 1999)*

On 17 August 1999, Friedrich (“Frieder”) Reiss – dear friend, colleague and advisor to many in our profession – died, in his 62nd year, from a recurrence of heart problems. Although the latter had been cause for concern for some years, this sudden end to Frieder’s central presence in our circle has come as an unexpected shock. He had hoped to still solve many taxonomic puzzles in the three years until his retirement, and surely would have continued to do so afterwards.

Frieder is survived by Annemarie Reiss, his wife for 37 years, and their son Peter. On their behalf we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the kind thoughts of all who responded to the sad news of Frieder’s passing with condolence letters and e-mails.

In Friedrich Reiss, chironomid research has lost a scientist who had for decades set the highest standards in this field of aquatic entomology. He was fortunate in being able to concentrate exclusively on the midges ever since the completion of his academic education. He took full advantage of this opportunity, not only for himself, but also with his constant efforts to make his achievements available to colleagues and aspiring biologists becoming interested in taxonomy and the Chironomidae. All who

* Slightly modified after Fittkau, E. J. & M. Spies 1999. CHIRONOMUS newsletter of chironomid research 12: 17-19.

have known him deeply appreciate not only Frieder's knowledge in our specialty, but equally so his wide-ranging interests in the natural sciences, and intellectual openness in general. From discussions with him, on any subject, one always walked away with something gained.

Born 24 December 1937 in Stuttgart, Frieder grew up in Schorndorf in Baden-Württemberg state, where he completed school in 1957 with the Abitur, the high school diploma and general qualification for college. In the same year still he began taking courses in biology, chemistry, and geography at Stuttgart University. In 1965 he transferred to the University at nearby Hohenheim, from which he graduated in 1966 with both a doctorate degree and the scientific part of a high school teaching certificate.

Following his interests in zoology/entomology and aquatic ecology – the latter developed during limnological lectures by Prof. J. Grim – he had turned to Prof. O. Pflugfelder of Hohenheim University to find an appropriate topic for his doctoral thesis. Under this guidance, Frieder was able to secure a grant from the German Academic Society's aquatic research program for a dissertation entitled "Ecological and systematic studies on the Chironomidae (Diptera) of Lake Constance. A contribution to the chironomid lake fauna of the northern prealpine area". This was carried out beginning in 1961, at the laboratories of the Lake Constance public water works in Siplingen, whose director was Prof. Grim.

During his time as a doctoral candidate, Frieder managed several times to visit and use the extensive chironomid resource collection established by Thienemann and curated by Fittkau at the Max-Planck-Institute for Limnology in Plön. These contacts led to a post-doctoral research grant to Frieder from the Max Planck Society to continue his chironomid studies at Plön, and in 1967 to his employment there as a research associate. His duties then were to help develop the chironomid center in continuation of the tradition of Thienemann and his school. The goals were to advance the taxonomy and diagnostics of Chironomidae through revisionary work, the international coordination of information and documentation, and not least through creating opportunities for basic and more in-depth studies by outside colleagues some of whom were then still working under rather isolated conditions. Frieder took an integral part in producing the new "Chironomus. Newsletter of chironomid research" as well as the first bibliography of all publications on chironomids, incorporating 7000 titles at the time. He also took care of the colleagues visiting the Plön collections of specimens and literature. It was back in those days, too, when the idea was first conceived to gather the knowledge of competent researchers worldwide for the development of definitive generic concepts in the Chironomidae, and of keys to the genera of the Holarctic fauna.

When it became apparent that a taxonomic research focus like the chironomid center would not have a lasting future within an ecology-oriented institution, Frieder did not hesitate to accompany the first author to Munich, in 1976, to continue chironomid science in a museum environment at the Zoologische Staatssammlung (ZSM).

Thanks to the courtesy of the directorate at Plön, both the Thienemann collections and the library could be transferred to ZSM. In Munich, Frieder became responsible for the Diptera Section, and in 1998 was appointed head of the entire Department of Entomology.

His enthusiasm and drive for chironomid research were not in the least affected by the change to comparatively poor work conditions at ZSM which was then insufficiently housed in the north wing of the Nymphenburg castle. However, it was not until ZSM had moved to its new building that Frieder was given the means to make the ever growing chironomid collections completely accessible, and to provide comfortable work conditions to visiting guests.

Next to his personal scientific projects Frieder gave high priority also to the continuous taxonomic analysis, incorporation, and availability to others of the already present and newly incoming collection materials. We all owe it to his diligent, persistent efforts in these regards, and to his thorough, determined style of work, that the chironomid collections at ZSM have reached the internationally renowned value they represent today.

Friedrich Reiss has been among the most influential people in the development of chironomid science from the beginning of his dissertation work. As one of the youngest participants of the first International Symposium on Chironomidae at Plön in 1964, he was able early on to establish contacts, soon developing into friendship, with most colleagues who were active then. One quick reward for his achievements was the invitation to Prof. Lars Brundin to accompany him on a three-month expedition in 1969/70 to southern Chile and Patagonia. With his critical analysis of the species from Lake Constance Frieder had started out by gaining comprehensive knowledge of the central European

fauna. Later, he focussed especially on the taxonomy and systematics of the Chironomini and Tanytarsini, and on issues of chironomid faunistics and biogeography in general.

The chironomid center at Plön was part of the institute's Department for Tropical Ecology. In this context, Frieder was given the opportunity to work out of Manaus, Brazil, from 1971 to 1972 to apply and compare his lake-ecological field experience to central Amazon habitats, and to gain further knowledge of the South American biota. After the move to Munich, the Neotropics continued to be one of his major research interests, next to European (especially Mediterranean) material and the previously poorly known local southern German fauna. Of special value among the results of Frieder's work, apart from his revisions and new descriptions of many genera and species, is his part in the compilation of the first comprehensive catalog of Neotropical Chironomidae. In 1997, Frieder was honored by the invitation to the second Brazilian chironomid congress at São Carlos, where for several days he conducted a course on taxonomy. Having enjoyed this trip without problems he gained new trust in his health, and renewed motivation to help develop chironomid research in Brazil.

Friedrich Reiss was a great gift to our science. His untimely death filled us all with deep sorrow. Whoever had the good fortune to work with Frieder will continue to sorely miss his competence, advice and friendship.

Prof. Dr. Ernst Josef Fittkau

Martin Spies

A word from the editors

When our good friend, treasured colleague and advisor, Dr. Friedrich Reiss, unexpectedly died last year, we were very grateful for the numerous expressions of sympathy we received and were asked to pass on to the family. Hence, we quickly developed the idea to produce a publication as a tribute to the memory of Frieder from his many friends and colleagues. Thanks to the generosity of Prof. Dr. G. Haszprunar, director of Zoologische Staatssammlung München, it has become possible to employ a regular issue of the journal SPIXIANA for this purpose. Aside from providing a frame befitting the occasion, this was extremely helpful by ensuring the financing and rapid appearance of the printed work.

Unfortunately the capacity of this volume is restricted, even though it has been expanded to more pages than usual. Therefore, to our regret, it was not possible to include all manuscripts received. Additional papers will appear in the following issue of SPIXIANA.

The volume of contributions submitted widely exceeded our expectations. This clearly reflects that Frieder was highly esteemed not only as a chironomid scientist, but also as a great and kind teacher, and – last but not least – as a favoured friend to many colleagues, a fact which to us seems worthy of the most particular praise.

A complete list of publications by Dr. Reiss is available from the ZSM homepage under http://www.zsm.mwn.de/wiss_start.htm, select 'Diptera', then 'Mitarbeiter'.

We know that we have made many colleagues' already busy work schedules even tighter in order to carry out our plan within a year of Frieder's death. We want to thank all colleagues who decided so readily to contribute to this volume, and also those who wanted to but could not manage within the short time limit we had set. Special thanks go to those who helped us review the manuscripts: Trond Andersen, Bohdan Bilyj, Pete Cranston, Mauri Hirvenoja, Jon Martin, Ole Sæther, Jim Sublette, Endre Willassen, some of them already burdened with writing a paper of their own. We are also grateful for the general acceptance of editorial requests which this time were more rigorous than usual. During the making of this issue, we constantly asked ourselves and our contributors: what would Frieder have done here, or thought of that? But wherever this publication may reach close to the level of the scientist we are trying to honour, that is by far in the largest part the merit of the authors, not ours.

With the present volume we hope to keep the memory of Frieder and his work alive in daily chironomid research, and to further this science by reminding it of one of its great proponents. But we also wish that he himself would have enjoyed reading and working with it.

Martin Baehr

Martin Spies