

THE 90th BIRTHDAY of Dr. WALTER DÖHLER

Dr. Walter DÖHLER was born on 19 June 1891 in the old part of the town of Altstadt-Waldenburg, in Saxony, which is today in the German Democratic Republic. The life sciences and biology in general have been his joy from childhood. He studied at the Universities of Munich and Leipzig. His Ph.D. thesis, which was supervised by the well-known scholar, Prof. Karl Chun, was already on caddisflies, a group of insects on which he has worked throughout his life.

He and his friend, the late Dr. phil. h. c. Georg Ulmer, are among the pioneers of German and West European studies on Trichoptera. His life has been dedicated to the study of caddisflies, despite many personal difficulties. He was imprisoned in the concentration camps of Hohnstein and Sachsenburg, served in both the 1st and 2nd World Wars and was a prisoner of war, but returned home to his insects in 1945. His wife, who gave him much help, died in 1977.

In his home town of Klingenberg on the River Main he established an insect collection and comprehensive library which have become a centre for studies on the taxonomy of Trichoptera, open to all. Many people have appreciated his generous help and advice. His visitors' book includes the names of specialists from all over the world, while his correspondence could be the source for a history of research on Trichoptera in this century.

His style of work is rather different from that of his colleagues: the emphasis has been, not on published papers, but on lists of records of insects which he has contributed, for example, to Fischer's Trichopterorum Catalogus. When asked to identify caddisflies his answer has always been prompt and exact, and often accompanied by valuable comments. Many publications have depended on this service and only a little footnote might reveal his contribution. He has initiated many research projects on caddisflies and helped students in the evaluation of their taxonomic results, so that a large number of scientists have benefitted from his interest.

He takes an active part in limnological symposia and congresses, and only two years ago, as the most senior German SIL member, he addressed the members of the National Limnological Congress in Schlitz.

In appreciation of his achievements in taxonomy, the Natur-Museum und Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg made him a Corresponding Member; he was awarded the Iron Medal on his 80th birthday, and finally was made a Life Member. He has given the Senckenberg Museum his own insect collections and catalogues which provide a complete cover of genera and families.

The fact that in February 1980 Dr. Döhler described a new species of caddisfly shows that he enjoys good health and spirits. We hope that he will be with us for many more years for the furtherance of the study of Trichoptera.

Wolfgang Tobias (Frankfurt)

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Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Trichoptera Newsletter](#)

Jahr/Year: 1981

Band/Volume: [08](#)

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