

2015-05-10

Obituary of Roger Klittich



Heidi and Roger Klittich (2001)

The unexpected death of **Roger Klittich** has deeply touched all those who had known him. Michael Negele has provided an extensive obituary accompanied by a lot of photographs.

A German version of Michael Negele's text (slightly modified) is available in this [pdf file](#)!

A friend left us

If you scroll down on the page www.klittich-pfankuch.de/service.htm you will find a nice [photograph](#) of Roger Klittich with his friend Hans Dieter Reichert.

With some melancholy I think back to the late afternoon of the 8th November 2014:

It was half a year ago in Weimar, nearly at the same hour that I am writing these lines, that I said goodbye to Heidi and Roger Klittich in the hotel Elephant.

Even if I was aware of his poor health for several years - we had frankly spoken about rather critical moments in 2014 - there was practically no reason to doubt that we would meet again at the end of June 2015 on the occasion of the summer auction on Theaterwall 17.

For in Weimar Roger Klittich seemed completely restored to health, he was as vital and brilliant as always, and virtually scintillatingly witty. (See this [photo](#).)

Mr. Klittich fascinated not only me by his short introduction to the upcoming auction of the Klopprogge collection, but also the much more expert audience of Chess Collectors International.



Roger Klittich in Weimar, 2014

The more I was deeply moved a few days ago by the terrible news that our friend and favourer - yes, our mentor as far as the development of the Ken Whyld Association as from 2003 is concerned - has left us forever. Obviously the weak organism was not able anymore to overcome a fatal interaction of two medicines, so the kidneys failed. Against expectation a strong will had suddenly to bow to fate.

Since November 1999 ([A short look back](#)) I have regularly attended the chess book auctions of the house Klittich-Pfankuch, and in these 15 years a relationship has developed which was based on more than mere interests relating to business or collecting.

Roger Klittich was always a welcome conversational partner to me, whereas I willingly took over the role of the listener. Particularly in the early days of the Ken Whyld Association we had long phone calls, he was adviser, organizer and sponsor in one person. But especially he was - together with his wife Heidi and his son Karl - a host, a role he felt visibly comfortable about and which he always knew to enjoy.

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Heidi and Roger Klittich

(2001)

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Roger Klittich himself

takes care of the bodily needs of his guests (2005)

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Discussion in

Braunschweig 2005



Our hosts in

Braunschweig, 2006



Our hosts in Braunschweig, 2007



Roger Klittich in November 2011 ...



... here with

Andreas Saremba

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A long row of

chess collectors (June 2014)

At this point I would like to express my thanks to Karl Klittich who - in spite of the difficult situation - has

willingly provided me with some biographical data.



Karl Klittich presents a bottle of wine with a KWA anniversary label (2008)

Roger Klittich was born in Pforzheim on 3rd June 1936, after the Abitur he started to study laws at the university of Heidelberg in 1955. There he became acquainted with his later wife Heidi Pfankuch, so it's no wonder that the "Badener" (native of Baden) ended up in Lower Saxony after passing his first state examination in 1961.

There he worked as a trainee lawyer (Rechtsreferendar) at the Braunschweig Higher Regional Court, but after the sudden death (01-03-1962) of the senior partner Marie Luise Pfankuch he took over the management of the second-hand bookshop Karl Pfankuch. In the same year (exactly on 11 August 1962) Heidi and Roger Klittich married, their son Karl was born in May 1963.

The bookseller's shop and the second-hand bookshop Pfankuch was founded by Karl Pfankuch in 1919. After his death the bookshop was continued by Marie Luise Pfankuch as a single-member company and in 1963 taken over by Adelheid (Heidi) Klittich-Pfankuch.

There followed the foundation of the Braunschweig publishing house Kleine Burg GmbH which henceforth took over the management of the newly founded limited partnership ("KG"). The bookshop was sold in 1975 and only the second-hand bookshop was still continued under the name Klittich-Pfankuch.

Roger Klittich had cleverly expanded the activities of the bookseller's shop and of the second-hand bookshop, particularly since 1966 by the participation in the international fair of antiquarians in Stuttgart.

In addition he willingly worked as a volunteer for the Association of German Antiquarians (1973-1978 as deputy chairman and from 1978 for more than a decade as the director of the a.m. Stuttgart fair) - Roger Klittich has always been a man of action, not just well-worded words.

He again and again gave proof of that by more than a dozen perfectly organized lectures, excursions (Wolfenbüttel, Ströbeck), or chess matches (John Donaldson consultation game; Lothar Schmid simul; Bernd Schneider simul) - see the photos below.



the Duke August Library (November 2003)

Group photo in front of

[Larger photo of the group](#)

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Roger Klittich in the Bibliotheca Augusta (KWA foundation event 2003)



First general meeting in Forchheim (2004) - the Klittich couple with Lothar Schmid (†)



Hans Engberts (†) and Roger Klittich
(Forchheim 2004)

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Visit of
Ströbeck (June 2006)

[Larger photo of the group](#)



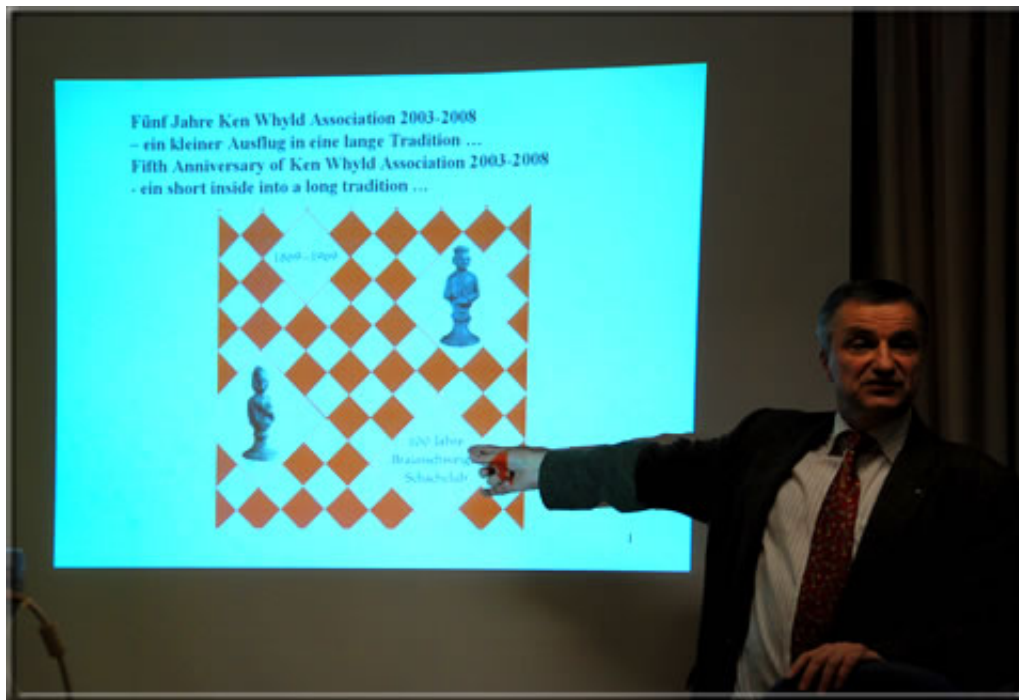
Simul by Lothar

Schmid (June 2001) ...



... and a clock

simul (on 12 boards) by Bernd Schneider in June 2005



A lecture by

Michael Negele (2008) - 5th anniversary of the KWA

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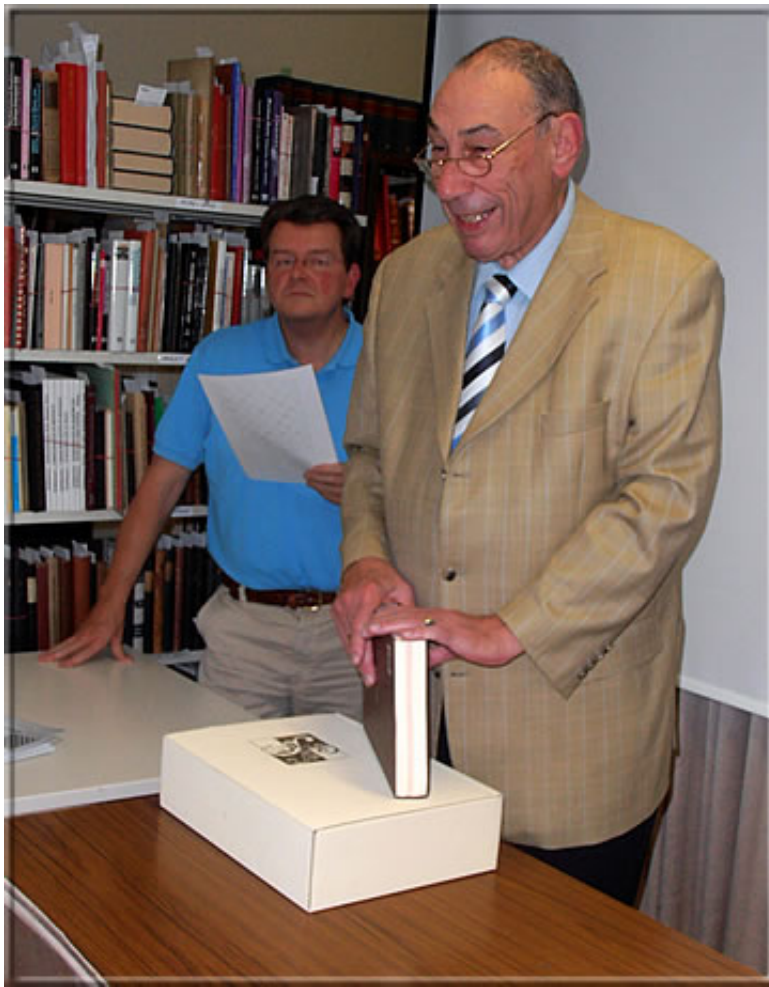
Consultation

game with John Donaldson (2008)

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• Roger Klittich
announces Wolfgang Angerstein's lecture Laska or Salta? (or Draughts ???) - June 2010.



Salta evening, again with a lecture
by Prof. Wolfgang Angerstein (2011)



Andreas
Saremba on his planned "New Gaije" project



Wolfgang

Angerstein gives a talk on marine chess (November 2013)

Not least I would like to thank him personally for his excellent and selfless support of the presentation of the Emanuel Lasker monograph in November 2009 at the Duke August Library in Wolfenbüttel, which would never had come about in this wonderful ambience without him.

It grieves me still today that he is not in the photo (and he only acted in the background as a "genie in the bottle" to fulfill the desires of the guests).

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Presentation of the Lasker monograph in Wolfenbüttel (2009)



Bottle of red wine with Emanuel Lasker label

The house Klittich-Pfankuch started their auctions in 1977 with the public sale of the artistic inheritance of the Braunschweig painter F.A. Sander.

Then, in 1978, that obscure order came in to auction off Russian icons for the financial administration of the city of Braunschweig, Roger Klittich gladly talked about that with superb irony.

Anyway it was the numerous anecdotes about the events in German and international auction halls that made the afternoons and evenings at Klittich-Pfankuch so entertaining.

And unbelievable but true:

Never was a story told twice, no punch line seemed hackneyed, our friend Roger Klittich was a real rogue.

The icon auction required the public appointment to a sworn auctioneer by the city of Braunschweig. Naturally that was a "competitive edge" which the prudent "Badener" knew to make use of.

So the lasting success of the auctions required to rent an auction hall as from 1987. The first auctions still took place at the hotel Deutsches Haus, afterwards on Bankplatz 8. My first acquaintance (and amazement) ensued in November 1999 on the occasion of the 36th auction, that year the move to Theaterwall 17 had just happened.

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Theaterwall 17

in Braunschweig

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Chess auction in July 2013, on the left Mrs. Gottschalk (independent protocol).

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Guy Van Habberney and Roger Klittich (July 2013)

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members (July 2013)

Former and current KWA board

Certainly one of the major successes of Roger Klittich was to have organized a first book-signing with the [duchess Victoria Luise](#) in the rooms of the former bookshop in 1965. According to the publisher's statistics he managed to sell about 10000 copies of the works of the last German emperor's daughter.

But for us, the collectors of chess books, Roger Klittich's decision to cultivate - from the 23rd auction in 1993 forth - the "marginal region chess" with the meticulousness and dedication of an antiquarian, was a real blessing.



Roger Klittich at the SELENUS exhibit (Exhibition in Braunschweig National Museum, November 2008)

For Roger Klittich the preoccupation with books was much more than a "job", it was his passion.

Over the years he had really grown fond of chess books - later on also of chess sets - especially by the cooperation with his numerous friends from the Ken Whyld Association and subsequently the Chess Collectors International as well. We all have noticed that, and therefore he will remain unforgotten.

For Roger Klittich lives on in the catalogs, the books and the chess sets which were purchased by auction in the house Klittich-Pfankuch, partly in fierce bidding contests, but always backed and motivated by this unique humanely acting auctioneer.

Many thanks, dear Roger Klittich, for all the wonderful hours you have so generously awarded to us in your hospitable house, together with your wife Heidi and your son Karl.

We always knew to appreciate that, and therefore know the more which loss your family and your staff have abruptly suffered.



The Klittich couple, Weimar, November 2014

Michael Negele
(translation R.B.)