

PITTSBURGH STEIN SOCIETY NEWS

Volume No. 8, Issue No. 3

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Happy March !! March 12th.
Daylight Savings Time Begins !!
Spring Forward !!

Next Meeting Schedule

Our next meeting will be on April 22, 2023. Future meetings will be on June 24, September 23, and November 11. All meetings start at noon and usually end around 2:00 P.M. Our Guest Speaker Coordinator, Tom Weber, is working hard to line up a guest speaker for the April 22nd meeting. Look for more details in the April newsletter.



Happy Birthday Wishes



Happy Birthday To:

Connie Platt..... March 1
Brian Hoffman March 4
Beverly Stack March 14
Bill Boss March 22
Joe Uhler March 27
John Wilson March 30
May your special day be filled with happiness and good health !!!

Did You Know ?

Did you know that the reference above to “Volume 8” indicates that we have been publishing this monthly newsletter for almost 8 years ?? The very first newsletter was published in September 2016. What started out as a question to our then President, Tom Weber, asking if he thought it would be a good idea to put out a monthly newsletter turned out to be a publication that , we hope, is informative, interesting, and helpful to all of our stein club members. The original idea of a newsletter was to try to bring our membership closer together as a family. With the Happy Birthday wishes, the get-well articles and announcements of special days of our members, we think we are heading in the right direction. If you would like to see changes to the newsletters, just let this Editor know. After all, this is YOUR newsletter.

Published Monthly by the *Pittsburgh Stein Society*

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Vice President	Bill Boss
Treasurer	Joyce Hoffman
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Guest Speaker Coordinator..	Tom Weber
Newsletter Editor	Tom Levenson

Tip of the Month

When purchasing a stein or when being the successful bidder on a particular stein in an auction, keep a copy of the receipt **in the stein** for a quick and detailed description, size, price, condition, etc. of that stein. It doesn't take very long to forget when you purchased the stein or who the designer was or some other detail of the stein. By having this information right there in the stein will allow you to take the stein off of the shelf, look inside and read everything you may want to know about the stein. It doesn't hurt to add information about the stein especially those details that may not show up on the receipt. The auction catalog description is a good source of information to put into the stein as well.

Featured Article of the Month

Thanks to our fellow PSS member Hal Platt, who submitted the attached article, this month's featured article tells us about one of the most prolific and talented artists of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Heinrich Schlitt's work appears on wood, stone , metal, clay and, of course, ceramics as evidenced by his work for Villeroy & Boch at their Mettlach facility. This article first appeared in the March 2000 issue of *Prosit* magazine and was

written by Arthur Maethner. Thank you, Hal, for submitting this very interesting article. Anyone who owns a stein designed by Heinrich Schlitt is a very lucky person indeed.

Oh, How We Have Changed

It was a warm and sunny afternoon on July 24, 2010. Tom & GiGi Weber were kind enough to host our stein club meeting at their lovely home in Bethel Park, PA. Tom had arranged for Ron Fox (front row, third from the right) to be our guest speaker for this meeting and the turnout to hear Ron speak was amazing. Jeff Arduini came down from Erie, Pa, Hal Platt and Jim Bee came from Johnstown, PA, Ted Bolla came from Cleveland, Ohio, and Carolyn & Martin Estep came from New Cumberland, PA (near Harrisburg). Tom & GiGi put out a lunch spread that would rival the menu of any restaurant. Unfortunately, since the date this photo was taken, we've lost 4 of our friends and fellow PSS members. Ted Bolla, Dick Platt, Dick Brush and Martin Estep all passed away much, much too soon.

Do you recognize the other PSS members in the attached photo? Oh, how we have changed !!



SCI Re-Chartering

Stein Collectors International (SCI) is in the process of completing its re-chartering study of member chapters for the year 2023. We're happy to announce that, once again, the Pittsburgh Stein Society (PSS) has been designated as a chartered member of SCI. As of the date of this newsletter, we have 19 members of the PSS who are also members of SCI. The minimum number of members required to remain a chartered chapter of SCI is 6. Congratulations once again to all of us at the PSS. Being a chartered member of SCI brings with it many advantages for our stein club. If you are not already a member of SCI, please consider joining. Membership information is attached to this newsletter. To join electronically, go to www.stein-collectors.org and follow the directions.

Welcome Back

Welcome back to a Ray & Colleen Frayer. Ray & Colleen were members of the PSS from 2018 to 2020. Unfortunately, due to a relocation and all the "must does" that go along with that, they had to allow their membership in the PSS expire. At our February 18, 2023 meeting they re-joined our stein club. We are very happy to see them back. Welcome back Ray & Colleen.

Thank You, Thank You

A great big THANK YOU goes out to Joe Uhler and Bill McKellar for their kind and generous donation that they included with their membership renewal payments. Thank you, Joe, and Bill, for your support of the PSS. Your donations will help to pay for future lunches and guest speakers.

We also want to thank those members who, when it came to pay for the lunch at our February 18th meeting, they said to "keep the change". This was a very nice gesture on their part and was greatly appreciated. You know who you are and, once again, we say thank you.



Above are two American Cold War Regimental steins from the mid 1950's.
(Photos courtesy of Fox Auctions – Check out their March 12, 2023 Stein Auction)



July 24, 2010
Hosts- Tom & Gi gi Weber





Stein Collectors International, Inc.

~ Heinrich Schlitt Remembered ~

by SCI Master Steinologist Arthur Maethner

(This article first appeared in *Prosit*, March 2000)



On August 21, 1999, steinologists around the world celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Heinrich Schlitt. They raised their steins and paid liquid tribute to the works of art which this man created in his lifetime of 74 years.

Heinrich Schlitt??? To the uninitiated the crowded consonants may sound unusually harsh, even when slightly Anglicized. Yet these two words cannot help but evoke a murmur in the hearts of all but the most blasé collectors of Mettlach stoneware, one that threatens to become a shout of ecstasy.

Collectors of antique drinking vessels place a particular value on those pieces in their collections on which these two words, Heinrich Schlitt, or a portion thereof, have been affixed. The mere mention of his name brings to their minds' eyes a myriad of images: the bold audacity of the thirsty knight, *der durstige Ritter*; the wizened visages of avaricious gnomes, mellowed by just a tinge of wry good humor; the anthropomorphic treatment of tankards and pretzels, sausages and steins, devils and playing cards, towers and trees.

Yet, when I did my initial research on Heinrich Schlitt some twenty years ago, there were many unanswered questions about this man. Who was he really? What did he look like? When did he die? Was he a native son of Munich, the Bavarian city with which his name is almost always associated? Is his work to be found on steins and plaques alone?

I attempted to find an answer to each of these questions and enjoyed a fair degree of success. I hoped that my research would bring to light other facts about the life of this man whose work is so beloved by steinologists the world over. Indeed it proved to be the impetus which eventually resulted in the publication ten years ago of a book, *Heinrich Schlitt 1849-1923*, jointly authored by J. A. Schmoll and Thérèse Thomas. This beautifully illustrated treatise provides detailed information on Schlitt's work as a painter of genre scenes, of dwarves and murals and as a designer of Mettlach ceramics respectively.

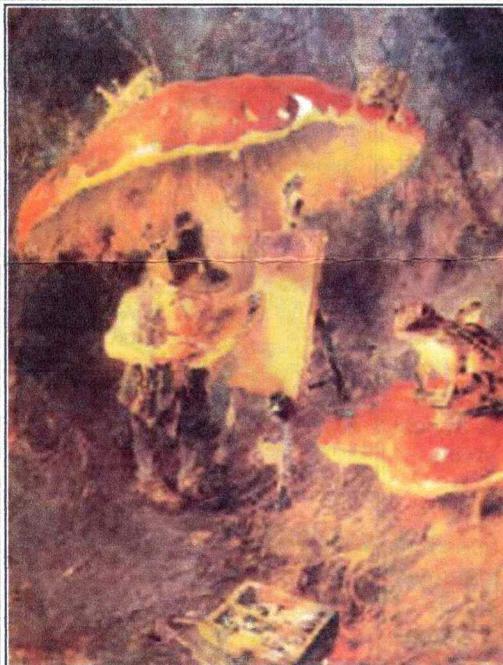
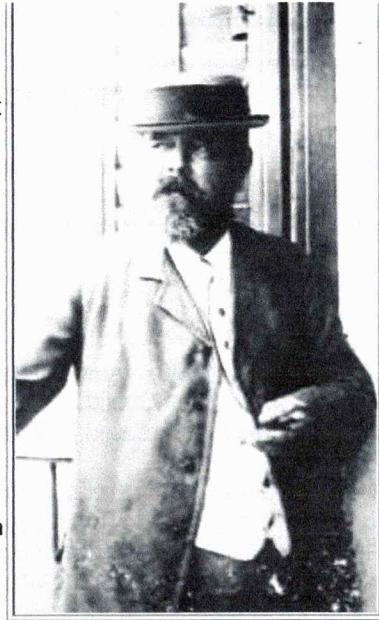
Three of the photographs which accompany this article are taken from this book. Herr Schmoll writes, "We see Schlitt standing... with a smile on his face in the glaring sun, wearing a derby hat, with the usual cigar in his right hand and a walking stick in his left. His coat cannot quite hide a mild paunch, and his legs blend into the shadows. So this is how Schlitt looked at the age of forty in the year 1889,... a year before he went to work



Schlitt's steins come playfully to life in this card table scene from Mettlach PUG 4.8 L master stein 1059(2488).



on the *Rathskeller* in Wiesbaden. The other photograph of Schlitt ... shows a much older artist. It was summertime, and Schlitt was wearing a straw hat. His attire was more meticulous, his light-colored vest almost festal. Could this picture have been taken on the occasion of Schlitt's 50th birthday in late August 1899, when his friends surprised him with a banquet and lots of mischief? The man in the picture looks earnest, even a little wary. There is no twinkle in his eye as in the other ferrotype, his beard is turning gray and there is something melancholy in his sideward glance, ... with advancing age (he) grew lonely, eccentric and depressive." Yet one of his closest friends says of him, "He was always a good comrade, jolly and full of fun,... (although) he was very shy of people." Herr Schmoll goes on to state, "Seen in that light, Schlitt's preoccupation with the gnome theme in his painting gains significance. It appears to be the artistic projection of his emotional problem. The little beings are everywhere, unseen, spying on him, whispering behind his back. ... For Schlitt, they probably constituted some kind of reality that other people could not perceive - a reality he had to contend with all alone."



"The Painting Dwarf" in the Museum Wiesbaden reveals the enchanted world of Heinrich Schlitt
(from the cover of "Heinrich Schlitt 1849-1923").

Heinrich Schlitt was born in Biebrich-Mosbach near Wiesbaden in Nassau on the Middle Rhine. Wiesbaden at that time was part of the Duchy of Nassau, but is now the capital of the German state of Hessen, the very territory from which the Hessian "mercenaries" of American Revolutionary War fame originated.

A propensity to the arts made itself felt early in his life. Although he was later a pupil of the historical painter Wilhelm Lindenschmidt, the first person to guide his footsteps down the artistic path was the highly talented Wiesbaden artist Kaspar Kögler. Schlitt regarded Kögler as his mentor. Indeed it was Kögler who helped him in a practical way to come into his own element so early. He was one of the favored few who was able to secure and maintain a comfortable livelihood in the arts early in his career.

Schlitt's exquisite sense of humor proved to be most useful in this regard. Schlitt was frequently occupied as an illustrator and as

an artist using all sorts of material (wood and stone, ceramics, clay and metal). His illustrations in periodicals of that time numbered in the hundreds. Most of his work came to be known to the general public through these illustrated magazines. Had he been born a century later, I feel certain that his path would have led him directly to Walt Disney's door.

As it was, in the early 1870's Schlitt's path led him to Munich, capital of Bavaria, one of the largest kingdoms in the newly-established German Empire. Under the tutelage of the aforementioned Lindenschmidt and his first teacher in Munich, Ferdinand Barth, he began his study of oil and watercolor painting. Almost all of his paintings from these decades leading to the turn of the century reflect Schlitt's belief that his work as an artist should be concerned with a portrayal of the more humorous aspects of life. By the age of 40 he had at least 40 major easel paintings in oil and watercolor to his credit.

Unfortunately for the general public, these works of art were for the most part owned, even at that time, by private collectors, most of them in England and the United States. Only a very few actually remained in Germany.

Schlitt's role as one of the principal artists for the ceramics firm of Villeroy and Boch in Mettlach is well-known to collectors of antique drinking vessels. The Schlitt paintings which adorn the walls of the *Rathskeller* in the Munich town hall are recognized by his admirers to be among his finest.

Less well-known, but in many ways superior in execution to this work in Munich, is his collection of 30 original drawings and four murals (actually "casein frescoes") which form a most definitive pictorial history of what could be termed *Bier-Kultur*. These works were specifically designed to be used in the decoration of the walls of the *Bierhalle* in the *Rathskeller* of the town hall in Wiesbaden in the spring and summer of 1890, when Schlitt, at age 41, returned to his native province from Munich to work with his old friend and mentor, Kaspar Kögler.

An interesting footnote to the research which I initiated twenty years ago was that I could find no reference book which listed the life and work of Heinrich Schlitt which also made reference to the circumstances of year of his death. Professor Schmoll was able to provide us with that information. In his book he relates that Heinrich Schlitt died in Munich on November 13, 1923, having spent his latter years in increasing solitude. He was buried at Munich's *Waldfriedhof* cemetery in the section reserved for artists' tombs of honor. Professor Schmoll concludes by saying, "His grave can be found in a glade in Munich's expansive *Waldfriedhof* (woodland cemetery), near a memorial column dedicated to all the Munich artists who have been laid to rest there."



Subsequent articles in *Prosit* will feature Schlitt's four murals and will provide the reader with a better idea of the unique way in which Heinrich Schlitt viewed certain events in the history of his world.



Before we give ourselves over to a study of these four murals, let us look first at the representations on those portions of the four arches which abut the central pillar. At the very center of this subterranean beer-temple, Schlitt has symbolized several types of libation which are common to the vast realm over which Gambrinus, the legendary patron saint of beer, holds sway. In these portraits in mock relief, sketched gray on gray in the form of medallions, we first note a valiant defender of the fatherland whose epaulets identify him as a military musician. This good fellow has a thirst which in his double role as soldier and musician is naturally twice as big. But this eager desire for a brew stands in sharp contrast to his pocketbook and so he must slake his thirst with the cheap but truly delicious *Batzenbier*, a beer which, as the name implies, goes back to an age when small coins known as *Batzen* were still in

circulation. This beer is more well-known in other areas as simple - old - or brown beer.

This dignified townsman in his grandfather cap is embracing an unpretentious *Weissbier*, a beer which is particularly refreshing during the heat of summer. One wonders that he is even capable of swallowing at all, wearing as he does the stiff old-fashioned collar so well-known in the Rhineland of the early 19th century.

This admirer of Bock has achieved a higher degree of perfection in beer gusto. Here is a man whose comfortable countenance and top hat reveal that he can well afford the



more expensive but heavily brewed bock beer.



statement.

A tankard of genuine *Klosterbräu* (cloister-brew) represents the highest of all sentiments for every devoted admirer of fine beer. These connoisseurs are all in tacit agreement that the pious spiritual gentlemen of the monasteries are without peer when it comes to the preparation of "spirited" beverages. Even those not privileged to taste a genuine Benedictiner at the source or to sample the brew from the holy mountain of Andechs, would probably be in agreement with this



On the walls which faced these "meditations" Schlitt portrayed with great good humor the awesome consequences of boozing, as well as the means to overcome such an affliction.

If we interpret the symbols correctly, we can assume that they advise us to lift the sundry consequences of an evening spent not too wisely but well, by the simple expedient of lifting another lid and completing the gesture with the enjoyment of three radishes and a fine *Weisswurst* (figure 5).

Ein Prosit! from Heinrich Schlitt!

Color illustrations were added to the original article by Walt Vogdes, webmaster.



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