



Wolter v. Tiesenhausen
Neue Schönhauser Straße 6
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FAMILY NEWSLETTER 2002

The Family v. Tiesenhausen

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Family meeting 2003

A cordial invitation goes out for the next ordinary family meeting in 2003. We plan to get together on 19/20 September in Schloss Höhnscheid near Kassel in Germany to talk, celebrate and enjoy the company of different parts of our wide family.

An interesting program will guarantee that the meeting takes place in a pleasant atmosphere. Those who have the time available are very welcome to arrive on Friday, 18 September 2003, in order to gain an additional evening to revive old and make new familial contacts. This time, we will be sharing Schloss Höhnscheid with another Baltic family because we incurred substantial costs through no-show fees in recent fees. That means that we will not have all the facilities to ourselves but we will be enjoying the good feeling of not having to pay extra.

The official part of the family meeting - which will take place on Sunday morning - will be dedicated to the further enlivenment of our family association. These considerations will build on the experiences made last year at the informal cousins meeting at Sabine and Hans Gerd Röder's hospitable home in Buchschlag, near Frankfurt, Germany (see report below).

Elections for a new board will not be necessary until the family meeting in 2005 (16-18 September). Then, as was established last time, a younger crew should take the helm. Everybody who wants to have a say and a vote what future shape the family association shall take is cordially invited to take part in the discussions and to bring in his or her ideas. Official invitations will be sent out shortly.

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Cousins meeting 2002

Long and vivid discussion at the last official family meeting in 2001 led to the decision to make such gatherings more interesting for the younger generation. It was held that young members should have the opportunity to associate family meetings less with stiff conversations with old aunts but with the enjoyment that can be had at such gatherings. This, admittedly not trivial task, has been exemplary put into practice at the first cousins meeting on 7/8 September last year.

Sabine and Hans Gerd Röder invited younger family members (and of course everybody else interested) to their hospitable home in Buchschlag, near Frankfurt, neither ducking cost not effort to put on an exciting, informative, culinary and merry weekend. Second thanks must go to the first-class chef whose cookery skills outclass every three-course menu in Höhnscheid. Karin v. Platen, nee v. Tiesenhausen, deserves a special family order!



Figure. 1 : Members of the family in the first class of a jumbo jet

But culinary delights were not the only alternative to a conventional family meeting. Sabine had managed to recruit a Lufthansa jumbo-jet pilot, who kindly gave us a special tour through the airport including areas which are not normally open to the public. Our group of knowledge-hungry Tiesenhausens gazed amazedly at giant turbines and machines which the competent captain was happy to explain in detail. A very special experience was a stint in the

first class cabin of a Boeing 747, followed by the opportunity to sit in the captain's seat in the cockpit. Everybody agreed, at the latest after enjoying the "first-class-chocolates" and trying out all possible sitting and reclining positions in the "first-class-seats", that the excursion was a full success.

Art-loving family members, meanwhile, had the opportunity to visit a unique art deco ensemble in Darmstadt, again skilfully guided by an expert. This eventful afternoon was followed by a cosy get-together with Karin's much praised delicacies, a lot of wine and an especially purchased bottle of vodka. Any prejudices about boring family meetings were forgotten and a unanimous vote labelled the weekend worthy of repetition. We are looking forward to the sequel.

Katharina Tiesenhausen

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Relations down under

Report from a trip to Australia

Our family genealogist Sabine Röder, nee Freiin von Tiesenhausen, is a teacher at a high school near Frankfurt. She took part in a pupils' exchange with Australia and used the opportunity to get to know some not so distant relatives.

Edward Ferdinand Jencken emigrated to Australia in 1850. He was the son of Christina von Löwenstein, who in her first marriage was wedded to Karl Gustav v.T. (1779-1854). Eight children stemmed from this marriage. The oldest son Herrmann had again two sons, Engelbrecht und Paul.

This is the spot for the genealogically interested reader to join us (Gothaer Handbuch, 1962, Bd. IV, Nr 27). In her second marriage, Amalie Christina was married to the doctor Ferdinand Jencken, who at first worked in Reval (Tallinn) and later in stints in Coburg and Bonn in Germany as well as in England and Ireland. The six children that stemmed from this marriage can be traced to Melbourne nowadays.

Cousin Neil Robertson lives on a country estate an hour north of Melbourne. The bachelor and hobby genealogist contacted Wolter, the president of the family association after he had discovered the Tiesenhausen website online. He was pleasantly surprised when we announced our visit, and we were very curious as well.

After a few email and telephone conversations we succeeded in establishing a recognition code for the airport. When our plane landed in Melbourne and we walked through the gate, a grey-haired gentleman suddenly emerged from the crowd and approaches me. It is him.

The welcome is very heartfelt and familiar. We talk about the family and, once arrived at his home, various documents and pictures quickly establish how close our relationship is. We are only three generation apart from each other, almost nothing by Tiesenhausen standards...



Fig. 2: Amalia Christina v. Löwenstern



Fig. 3: Neil Robertson and Sabine Röder

Evening and afternoon are spent talking and we relish in the many similarities that surfaced. Neil is not only well versed in family history but he is also an excellent cook and wine expert.

The next day, Neil takes us on a trip through the beautiful countryside in the vicinity. Australia is fascinating for Europeans - so much that looks familiar at first glance turns out to be exotic and entirely different the next moment. Neil is a botanist by profession and works as chief executive officer on a private program that opens private gardens to the public on certain occasions. It is not surprising that his own garden is a special jewel. Beautiful spring-blossom plants from daffodils via forget-me-nots to lilac, but also roses and camellias flower in an almost park-like landscape.

After a tour through Melbourne, we visit James Yencken in the evening, who possesses an impressive oil painting of Amalie Christine placed in his reception room. It hardly takes any time to establish a warm relationship with him, his wife and his brother Anthony. Inspired by our relationship, our hosts prove very interested in our lives. The host's mother also has time for us and extends her invitation. She still lives in the house of her parents comprising the rooms in which her father practised as a doctor.

The next day we are shown what the pioneering work undertaken by Australia's first immigrants must have been like as we visit a replica gold-diggers' camp. Australia has an abundance of natural wealth and, apart from precious stones, gold still plays an important role in its economy.

The days in Melbourne fly by - so many impressions, our friendly hosts and cordiality that is difficult to describe make it hard for us to say good-bye. We promise to come back and invite Neil to the next family meeting in Höhnscheid - let's hope he comes so that you can meet him as well.

Sabine Röder

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Kokenhusen/Koknese today



Koknese, Kokenhusen, is reached driving from Riga eastwards along the Düna river for about an hour. The proud castle, which used to be an important fortification against the Lithuanians in the 13th and 14th century, is situated where the small stream Perse flows into the Düna. Even today, the mighty ruins with their Gothic window shapes are an impressive sight.

In 1965, the Düna was dammed. As a result, the castle ruins are not presiding any longer above the waters but situated quite romantically on the banks of an artificial lake. In order to protect the ruins' foundations from leaking water, a concrete wall was erected on the side facing the lake.

Kokenhusen is closely linked to the history of our family. Johann von Tiesenhausen, the son of our founding father Engelbrecht, married Sophie, a granddaughter of Duke Wjatschko von Kukenois and Polotzk. Bishop Nicolas of Riga granted him the fief of Kokenhusen in 1269. Ten years later, Engelbrecht died in the battle of Ascherade against the Lithuanians. He must have been an impressive personality because his death is much sung about in the middle-high-German lyrics at the time. As a bearer of the Mary's banner - Livland was consecrated the mother of god - he belonged to the leading figures of the country.

His son, who was also called Johann, inherited the fief of Kokenhusen and tried hard to keep the important possession. When Riga's then archbishop Johann von Schwerin tried to subsume Kokenhusen for the church again, Tiesenhausen sided with the German Order which was itself engaged in a fight with Riga's highest-ranking cleric. But Johann von Vechte, Schwerin's successor, managed to secure the support of the Hanse, the mighty association of cities situated around the Baltic Sea, sought help from Denmark and Sweden and even tried to bond with then pagan Lithuania in order to get Kokenhusen back under the church's wing.

Johann von Tiesenhausen was not that easily impressed. When the archbishop visited Kokenhusen, he just arrested him and handed him over to the German Order. The latter had little choice but to let him free again. But the thus exposed and shamed bishop then left Livonia, not without anathematising Johann von Tiesenhausen. Although that meant that he was thereby expelled from the society of Christians, this excommunication did neither impress Johann nor his contemporaries very much.

He served as an ambassador for the German Order, was speaker of the Ritterschaft of the arch foundation of Riga and took over the latter's leadership in 1318. Having thus secured this position, he considered himself well-placed to undertake another attempt to secure Kokenhusen for himself and his descendants. He asked the then archbishop Friedrich von Pernstein for forgiveness. This gesture must not have been easy for such a self-conscious man as Johann von Tiesenhausen. But it was in vain. The archbishop did not even think about giving away Kokenhusen.

Johann took matters into his own hands, and with the support of the German Order, simply conquered Kokenhusen. The response of the archbishop was quick: The anathema was

renewed and all estates lent to the Tiesenhausen family were withdrawn. Johann appears to have been unmoved by this. The excommunicated continued to reside in Kokenhusen until his death in 1340.

His sons Engelbrecht und Bartholomeus aim to have the anathema against their father withdrawn. With the help of a large sum of money, they manage a settlement with the representatives of the archdiocese of Riga in the French town of Avignon, then the residence of the Popes. Although therein they oblige themselves to eventually return Kokenhusen to the church, they were not in a hurry to fulfil their promise. Both still lived in the important castle and plotted their positions in Livonia's internal power struggles.

The weakness of the archbishop, not least achieved with the help of the Tiesenhausens, strengthened the position of the German Order. It succeeded in 1393 to have a member of the Order, Johann von Wallenrode, chosen by Pope Bonifacius IX as the new archbishop of Riga. He forcefully restored order in the country. In 1397 him and the Tiesenhausens agreed that after 130 years of ownership Kokenhusen would be returned. In return, the brothers receive the right to build, i.e. extend new castles in Berson and Erlaa.

Kokenhusen remains a much fought for castle because of its strategic positioning on the Dūna which makes it a gateway to Riga. The castle was changed and refurbished several times according to the latest advances of military science and the taste of its various owners. The last ruler of Kokenhusen were Saxon troops which conquer the castle in the Nordic War in 1700. When they had to withdraw a year later, they blew the fortification up. Since then, Kokenhusen has been in ruins. Romantic poets like Gustav von Hirschheydt have written about them and till today, the many visitors who travel to these walls remain impressed.

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Genealogy news



Hans G. Trüper, professor for microbiology in Bonn, is also a passionate Historian. After twenty years of research, he has recently published a Dissertation about the ministries of the arch foundation in Bremen, Germany. The Book is called "Knights and Knappen between Weser and Elbe" and is published as Sequel in a series of publications of Landschaftsverband Stade. The extensive work has more than 1,000 pages and costs €50.

Trüper describes the typical ascent of a minister from an ordinary servant to knight, which was one of the most important societal developments of the Middle Ages. These ministers manifest and secure the reign of bishops and counts. They form the administrative and military foundations of society. They administered castles and estates, derived taxes and duties and served in the bishops' offices.

The founding father of our families, Engelbrecht de Tisenhusen, was such a minister, serving the counts Wölpe on their castle in Nienburg an der Weser. That he was already in a

privileged position was underlined by the fact that he married the sister of Albert von Buxhoevede, the Bremen dome master and later bishop of Riga. Twice - 1209 and 1224 - he took part in the crusades to Livland, acquired the title Vogt von Tryden and received the fiefdom of castle Odenpäh south of Dorpat, now in Estonia.

Trüpers extensive book is a true treasure grove for a reader interested in the history of the time. It does not only picture the development of medieval society, but also the legal structures the ministers worked in. Rights and duties were finely balanced and co-ordinated up to every tiny detail. These structures formed the basis of what one would nowadays call state bureaucracy.

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Tiesenhausen online

The internet is becoming ever more important as a means of communication. The family association was quick in securing the rights to a domain in our name and will continue to extend our presence online. Our webpage www.tiesenhausen.de is accessible in English and German. A special password, which is only given to members of the family, is necessary to access internal messages such as the latest minutes of meetings of the family association. Webmaster, and also the person to contact for passwords, is Cyrill Frhr. von Tiesenhausen, Knaackstr. 8, D-10405 Berlin, email: cyrill@tiesenhausen.de

This newsletter will be sent electronically per email to those whose addresses are known to the board. If you have suggestions how to improve or extend our internet presence, please get in contact with Cyrill.

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Family news

Cousin Hans-Ralph (Wunstdorf-Klein Heidorn) has finished his master studies in Philosophy, history and German, which he started after retiring from the German army, with distinction. He has since started a dissertation. The family congratulates.

Bettina, eldest daughter of Sabine, our family genealogist, has passed her first state exam law.

Cyrill (Berlin) - son of Waltraut and Wolter - has finished his studies in Heidelberg and Boston with a diploma in medical informatics. Since last October, he works on his PhD at Humboldt University in Berlin.

Gabrielle Freiin v. Tiesenhausen, daughter of Hans-Heinrich (Vancouver), has married Jörg Neumann in the German church in Vancouver. The newly-weds live in Munich (Dall'Arminstr. 3a, 80638). The family sends their heartfelt congratulations and hopes to get to know the new cousin at September's meeting of the family association.