

*“When you sow love  
joy will grow”  
William Shakespeare*

## **Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke – unforgotten shining light and inspirer for rural planning and building**

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## **Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke – source of joy and energy**

Two years after his sudden death, Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke still is omnipresent – omnipresent at his Chair at TUM and in his and Hans Schraner’s architectural office, at my Chair for Land Division and Land Development at Bayerische Akademie Ländlicher Raum, at Bayerische Architektenkammer, the supreme building authority, at Landesverein für Heimatpflege, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Landtechnik und landwirtschaftliches Bauen in Bayern (ALB), but also at the offices for rural development, and particularly in many rural communities in Bavaria. In these communities – and this is quite unusual for a university professor – people are grieving for this talented and often so “merciless” mediator and implementer of values of building culture and location and identity-friendly planning, and feel left alone in times of state withdrawal from building quality and restrictions due to building regulations. The people working in the department “Zentrale Aufgaben” of the Bavarian village renewal administration, i.e., Verwaltung für Ländliche Entwicklung, occasionally sigh: “If only Matthias Reichenbach was still here...”

Why are people everywhere mourning for such a long time, what made Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke so popular?

One of the reasons is the feature that I attributed to my deceased friend and colleague in my funeral oration on 25 April 2008 with the Shakespeare quotation prefacing this contribution: “When you sow love, joy will grow. This saying has never been more suited to anyone than to Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke. When you sow love, not only joy will grow, but also friendship. We were able to experience both joy and friendship with Matthias.” Joy and friendship thanks to his nature, his open-mindedness, his politeness

also with respect to opposing opinions, his impressive straightforwardness, his placability and his technical and educational motivation. Indeed, it was fascinating to talk to him, to argue with him, to come to an agreement and work together. In the best-possible way, Matthias was a source of energy. Wherever he was and worked, he left a strong impression and a lasting mark.

### **A godsend for his trade: urban planner and structural engineering architect**

The varied technical skills and achievements of Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke in the course of his professional life certainly show here and there in this book or at least outline the last ten years. I cannot and do not intend to give a detailed account of his achievements, and by no means can I acknowledge them here. However, I would like to describe how important our meeting in the early 1970s was; you could nearly call it a historic act of providence, for: if Matthias Reichenbach had not been an assistant and employee at Prof. Helmut Gebhard's Chair and office, he maybe would not have obtained such an early and fundamental approach to the nature of rural planning and building and subsequently – which cannot be overestimated in its colossal, large-scale leverage effect – to village renewal, land consolidation and urban renewal of rural locations. The keywords Pfeffenhausen, Hesselberg and research project village renewal should suffice here. The “historic” act of providence certainly was that I had been sent to the just established Chair for Land Division and Land Development to head the Chair after the early death of my predecessor Heinz Möser, which also made me responsible for the village renewal project “Dorferneuerungsforschungsvorhaben Kreuzberg”. This is how the first work contact with Matthias Reichenbach developed, which soon was based on mutual respect and then also friendship. It was a great advantage for Bavarian village renewal when Matthias committed himself to village renewal after his days at TUM as a freelancer, at the village planning authority of the administration of Lower Bavaria or at Regensburg University of Applied Sciences. His early masterpiece was the village renewal project Niederalteich, which established his fame and reputation. The incredibly complex village renewal for Loiching only reconfirmed the comprehensive maturity and authority he had reached by then.

Therefore, it only was a question of time until TU Munich called back their alumnus and made him full professor. This also was of great interest for Holger Magel, the head of

village renewal in the Ministry of Agriculture in those days, who clearly voiced his opinion in this matter. For Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke was needed as a mediator for village renewal and rural planning and building in theory and practice.

Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke's appointment as the successor to Helmut Gebhard also was a lucky strike for my Chair, since it led to many fertile discussions, courses and seminars and approaches for research between the two institutions and particularly between the long since close chairmen and the employees who cooperated more and more over time.

Everything merged, and therefore it was no surprise that Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke was elected member of the board of Bayerische Akademie Ländlicher Raum shortly after being called to TU Munich. He remained closely and intensely connected to the academy until his death.

What would Bavarian village renewal be without the influence of Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke? What would Bayerische Akademie Ländlicher Raum be without him? In countless conventions he provided often also uncomfortable food for thought; he also had to deal with severe criticism, because he was not always immediately understood, but could always rely on “his” President to support him with arguments or even protect him whenever things became really difficult and tight. Indeed, that was our relationship: Matthias was like a brother to me; there was an unbreakable link between us and a general consensus regarding professional matters.

Thus I was very happy when Matthias started work at the working group Europäische Arbeitsgemeinschaft Dorferneuerung und Landentwicklung, which I had established in cooperation with Baden-Württemberg and Lower Austria, and later became the successor of the highly respected Prof. Wilhelm Landzettel from Hanover as President of the Jury for the European Village Renewal Award. This activity opened up more great perspectives of the European situation, which was not only advantageous for his work at the Chair, but also for the Bavarian village renewal landscape that was inspired strongly by him to the last – and of course for my Chair, because our research work often was based on achievements of the Chair of Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke or his office. In this context, I would like to make clear that he, like his predecessor Helmut Gebhard, was one of the few urban planners and architects to acknowledge the indispensable role of land division. After

all, it was Fritz Schumacher who already stated in the 1930s that urban development and urban planning actually were land policy and land division before anything else. In “Stufen des Lebens” he wrote in 1935: “In the first and probably most important chapters of its work, urban development basically is practical land policy.”

The two Chairs worked together closely and inspired each other, for example, in exciting projects such as Hopferstadt in Lower Franconia, where urban development renewal measures and instruments had to be linked with the village renewal and land division instruments according to land consolidation law. The work of Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke in the village renewal and land consolidation community Fraunberg in Upper Bavaria also was very exciting, since he introduced a new function in the land use plan for the first time in Bavarian land use planning history with the aim of explicitly labelling and thus protecting the cultural landscape. Bayerische Akademie Ländlicher Raum acknowledged particularly this pioneering achievement by incorporating the sensational contribution “Das Experiment von Fraunberg – eine bayerische Gemeinde streicht die Gewerbegebiete aus ihrem Flächennutzungsplan” in its 20-year commemorative publication “Für das Land”, which was published after his death but nevertheless has a title page he influenced.

Matthias Reichenbach-Klinke made much too little fuss about this pioneering achievement; that is just the way he was: certainly self-confident, but ultimately modest and never pretentious. Viewed in this light, he was not suited for the role of the commonly found star architect. Maybe this is why state and society did not confer public distinctions on him, which he clearly would have deserved for his outstanding achievements.

### **An ever present friend**

So many more things would have to be mentioned; for instance, the international podium and our planned activities in Africa and Asia or the agreed solidarity in the fight against the possible weakening of the land planning and land development programme in Bavaria.

His employees are continuing many of his projects, some of them, which is very gratifying, already as well-respected members of Bayerische Akademie Ländlicher Raum.

I will never forget Matthias alone for the reason that despite his always so exceptionally heavy workload and often scary and lonely drives home at night from God knows where, he always found the time to accompany the conversion and clearly designed furnishing of his friends Holger and Ansi Magel's house or, which was even more strength-sapping, because of his emotional involvement, to do the artwork for the commemorative collection for Matthias Magel. Thus my/our friend Matthias Reichenbach is ever present for me, and he will also always be directly and indirectly for the villages of Bavaria.

Is there anything better you could say about a person?