

## Editorial

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Dear Hans,

Congratulations on your 80th birthday, this volume is entirely dedicated in your honour. We wanted you to get a very special present. You will find a whole series of paper of colleagues and friends with whom you have been collaborating for the last 50 years. We all want to say “thank you Hans” for having done such a good job for us and the generations of palaeontologists to come.

The grapevine told us that you were first attracted to fossils, when you saw a picture of a Triassic crinoid (*Encrinus liliformis*) in the 1930 edition of the Pestalozzi youth calendar (Fig. 1). Later on you managed to trade it from another museum for the Basel collection. That is the reason why we figure its picture again here for your birthday volume.

**Fig. 1** *Encrinus liliformis* from the 1930 edition of the Pestalozzi youth calendar



I checked my field book to figure out when I first meet you. I had read most of your papers before, and those led me to pursue my interest in fossils and later my career as palaeontologist. You visited my first “amateur” exhibit on fossils in 1975, and I was really proud to have such a renowned palaeontologist to visit and talk to me. Later on you came to inspect and see the results of the palaeontological excavation in the Late Jurassic Effingen beds in Switzerland, where we collected lots of fine specimens of *Pentasteria longispina*, which you had described as a new species a couple of years earlier. During most of my career as an echinoderm palaeontologist we did cross each other, be it as peer reviewer or reviewed person, and of course on many fossil shows or the Annual meeting of the “few” Swiss palaeontologists. Later on, we discussed the lifestyles of Mesozoic crinoids, especially *Saccocoma*, and *Seirocrinus* and of course *Chariocrinus* and all the beauties found in the Middle Jurassic rocks of our home country. Since a couple of years you are a volunteer in “my” museum, and finally we managed to write a joint paper on a new fossil ophiuroid from the Swiss Jura Mountains that made me very happy.

Last but not least, I want to thank you for the collection you donated to our museum; this means that we host probably one of the best Mesozoic fossil echinoderm collections comprising several thousand specimens.

Hans, on behalf of all contributors and myself

Thank you very much; we owe you a whole lot of knowledge on fossil echinoderms and much more.

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### A short history of Hans

Hans was born on 25th June 1930 in Basel, where he went to school as most people do and graduated in

pharmaceutics at the Basel University. His Ph.D. treated a subject in microbiology. Later on, he worked in pharmaceutical research and development with Ciba-Geigy until his official retirement in 1991.

His love and dedication to palaeontology goes back to his school time during which he started to collect the whole array of fossil echinoderms.

During the 1940s and 1950s of the (already) last century, these fossils could still be easily found in the vicinity of Basel, especially the completely articulated isocrinid crinoids such as *Chariocrinus* or the oldest comatulid crinoid *Paracomatula* (1950).

Later on came the bunch of seastars, ophiuroids and sea urchins, and most of his publications were funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. He became a volunteer in the Natural History Museum of Basel, and after his retirement he wrote the book "Fossil crinoids" together with some of his colleagues. In 2006, he published a monograph on Early Jurassic crinoids from the Southern part of Switzerland just to name a few. However, in the last years he started to make a revision of the "Articulata" volume of the Treatise on Invertebrate Palaeontology, which should be printed soon.

In 1989, he got the Doctor Honoris causa of the University of Basel, and in 2001 the HH Bloomer Award of the Linnean Society of London. In 2002, he received the Harrell L. Strimple Award from the American Paleontological Society. In 2006, his work was finally acknowledged by the Swiss Palaeontological Society who rewarded him with the Amanz Gressly Prize.

For more than 50 years, Hans Hess has dedicated his research to taxonomy and palaeoecology of fossil echinoderms. His professional contributions have valuated many fossil lagerstätten such as the Schinznach locality in Switzerland or in Francee La-Voûlte-sur-Rhône just to name a few. Moreover, his successive papers monographing isolated skeletal remains of ophiuroids from screen washed residues have become the only standard work for the taxonomy of these Mesozoic fossils. On the whole, his numerous scientific papers and monographs are a fundamental contribution to the knowledge of Mesozoic echinoderms, which have been acknowledged on a world wide scale.

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