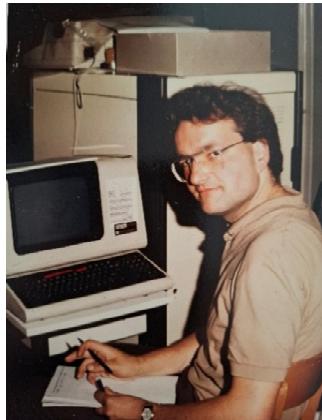


Lieber Herr Toennies,

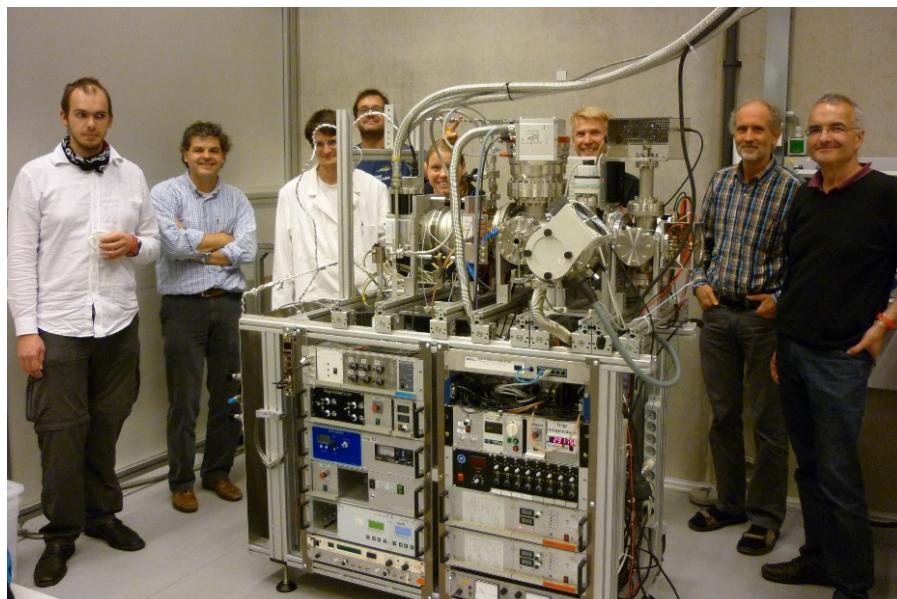
I entered your group in 1984 as a young diploma student. I was attracted by the wonderful laboratory course of the Toennies group where I was carried away by the idea to repeat experiments as a student which were top science only a few years ago. I try the same idea with my students these days in Köln. It still seems to work.



Fortunately, I was supervised by Manfred Faubel who's brilliant idea of the water jet became the topic of my diploma work. It took me a while to realize that this was not just another thesis but the beginning of an important development for understanding the surfaces of liquids: *Sehr Spannend*. Being part of a team to search for answers to fundamental problems in Molecular Physics turned into a theme for my career which started in those days.

We were many students in your group at the time and the topics were very divers. This environment made my life so much richer. Especially the many, many international guests were an inspiration for all of us as was already pointed out

by so many contributions to your virtual guestbook. Apart from the people already mentioned several times, John Fenn, Lev Rusin¹, Don Secrest, Lutz Zühlicke and all our guests from Novosibirsk come to mind. Not only the science discussions but also culture, politics and free thinking were the characteristics of this time. And what a time it was when the border to east Germany opened. All these experiences opened intellectual doors in our minds which fortunately never closed again. Finding peers with the same spirit was an equally important ingredient for our advancement.



After postdoctoral stays in Perugia (Piergiorgio Casavecchia) and in Berkeley (Rich Saykally) I spent almost ten years in the group of Dieter Gerlich at TU Chemnitz for my Habilitation before I became professor, first at Leiden Universiteit and since 2004 in Köln, where I am currently heading the astrophysics institute.

Primarily, my group is hunting for spectra of molecules, eventually found in space based on those

¹ See his contribution

spectra. But molecular collisions are still at the heart of what I want to understand. In that sense, I am still an old *Strömungsforscher*. This combination of topics gives our work a special flavour.

You can be proud of having provided us the right environment and spirit which attracted top scientists from around the world, but also your students went out and took all the challenging opportunities they were given or found on their way, as nicely described in the guest book. I believe this is the magic formula of science, the honest search for truth in a community of people sharing this very spirit. I am grateful for having been taken aboard this journey when entering your group some 40 years ago.



Congratulation, Peter Toennies to your 95th birthday and for setting an example for a life in science.

Sincerely,

St. Schlemmer

Pictures in the order of appearance:

1. ~ 1985: as a diploma student with Gerd Kraft
2. ~ 1987: Conducting measurements with PDP11/23 ...
3. ~ 1989: Happy days in Hardehausen (with Bernd von Issendorff following a scientific talk)
4. 2014: Shipping our home-built ion trap instrument FELion as a permanent installation to the free electron laser facility FELIX/Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen where it is productive ever since.
5. 2021: Schlemmers in Paris
6. ☺ ~ 2016
7. MOLEC 1988 in Assisi. Spot JPT, yourself or a friend!

