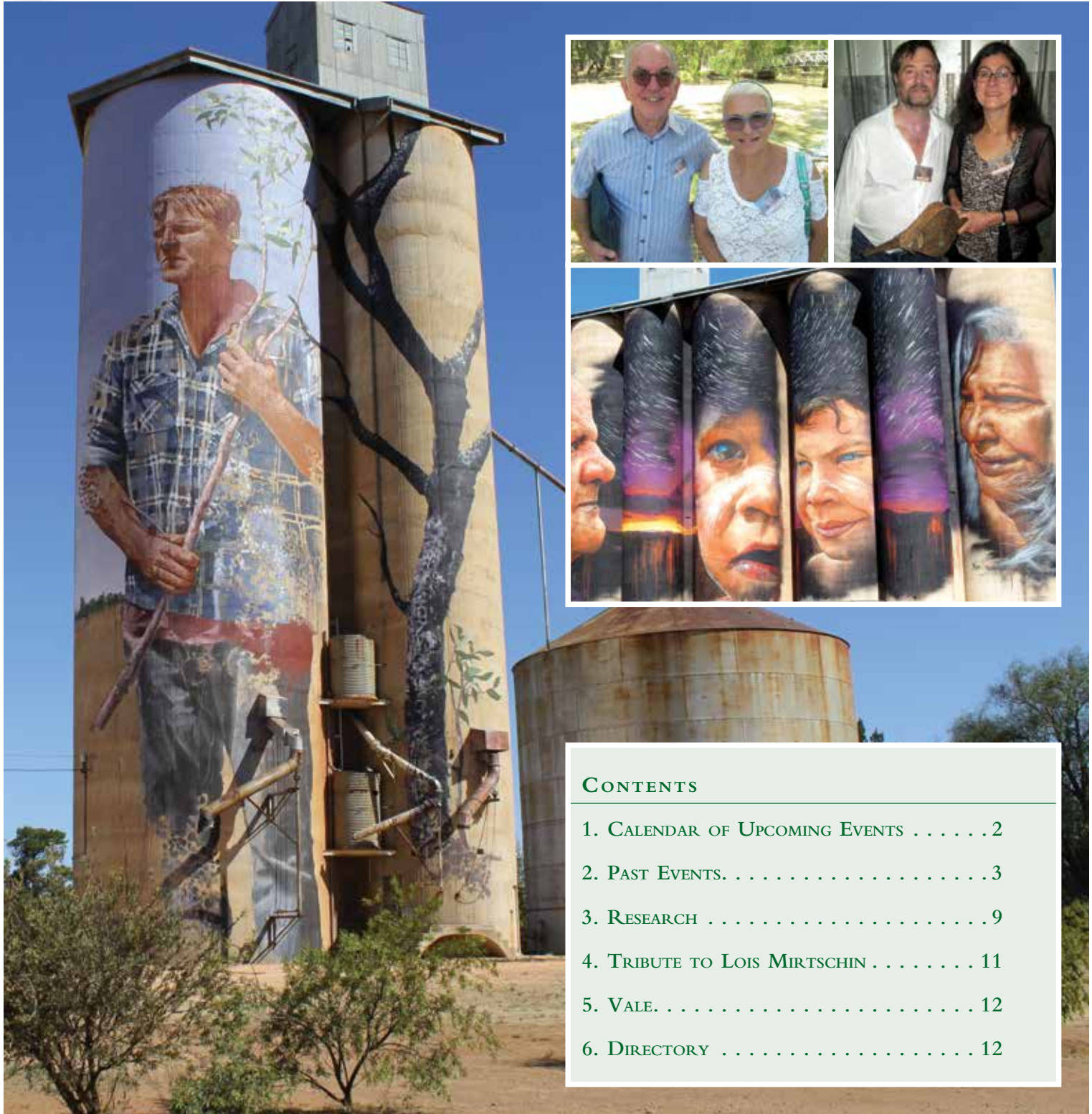




# wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

NUMBER 61 SEPTEMBER 2018



## CONTENTS

1. CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS . . . . .	2
2. PAST EVENTS. . . . .	3
3. RESEARCH . . . . .	9
4. TRIBUTE TO LOIS MIRTSCHIN . . . . .	11
5. VALE. . . . .	12
6. DIRECTORY . . . . .	12

*March Tour to the Wimmera-Mallee (see report p.3).*

*Clockwise from main: 1. Silo art at Patchewollock portraying local farmer Nick Hulland. 2. Rob Wuchatsch and Sue Gravenall. 3. Mick Ampt and Glenys Wollermann. 4. Silo art at Sheep Hills portraying Indigenous people.*



# Calendar of upcoming events

## Walla Walla 150th Anniversary Trek Re-run, Sun 7 Oct – Fri 12 Oct 2018

In 1868, pioneers left Ebenezer in South Australia and trekked overland to settle in Walla Walla, NSW.

As part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations, a Trek Re-Run will take place from 7–12 October 2018.

As advertised in our Wendish e-News in June 2018, this will be a self-drive event and will include trek history talks along the way.

Bookings closed on **31 August 2018**. A report on this event will be included in our next Newsletter. See below for details of further 150th celebrations to be held in Walla Walla in January 2019.

## Trudla Malinkowa's visit to Australia, 10 October – 13 November 2018

Gertrud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa in Wendish) works at the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen. She is the author of *Shores of Hope*, which describes the experiences of the Wends who migrated to Australia, America and South Africa.

Trudla will spend two weeks in South Australia, then two weeks in Victoria visiting Wendish sites in both states.

Betty Huf has prepared the itinerary for her Victorian visit. We are very pleased to announce that Trudla will speak at our Annual Luncheon. See details below.

### ★Annual Luncheon, Sat 27 Oct 2018★

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our Annual Luncheon at the Lady Barkly room, Barkly Motorlodge, 43 Main Road, Ballarat, Vic. Tel. (03) 5331 8838.

**Time:** 12.00 for a 12.30pm start, Sat 27 Oct, 2018.

**Cost:** Approx. \$28.50 per person, to be paid on the day by individual attendees.

**Guest Speaker:** Noted Sorbian academic Gertrud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa), visiting Australia for four weeks.

*Please book by Sunday 14 October 2018 with Betty Huf, P.O. Box 26, Tarrington, Vic. 3301;*

*Tel. (03) 5572 4959; email [bettyhuf@westvic.com.au](mailto:bettyhuf@westvic.com.au)*

*Bookings are essential.*

## Wuchatsch Family History Book Launch, Sunday 28 October 2018

Rob Wuchatsch's family history book will be launched at 1.30 pm on Sunday 28 October at Ziebell's Farmhouse, 100 Gardenia Rd, Thomastown, Victoria. Trudla Malinkowa (Gertrud Mahling) will attend this event. All are welcome.

## Ziebell's Farmhouse: Open Garden, Sat 17 – Sun 18 November 2018

Ziebell's Farmhouse and heritage garden will be open, as part of Open Gardens Victoria, on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 November. You are invited to experience the homestead and the garden in its full glory. The Open Gardens Victoria website will give full details when they post their Spring listing. See [www.opengardensvictoria.org.au](http://www.opengardensvictoria.org.au).

On 26 April 2018, it was announced that Ziebell's Farmhouse has been awarded Museum Accreditation by Museums Australia (Victoria).

*Ziebell's Farmhouse (c. 1850–51) is at 100 Gardenia Rd, Thomastown Vic. It is Victoria's oldest German immigrant building. It is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, 1.00–4.00 pm.*

## Walla Walla 150th Anniversary Celebrations, 25–28 January 2019

The major weekend of celebrations will take place from 25–28 January 2019. These celebrations will include a range of entertainment, the Greater Hume Council Australia Day event, German style food and beer, a thanksgiving celebration, a community picnic lunch, a street parade and much more.

*For further information, contact Trevor Schroeter 0439 982 196 or Selina Kohlhausen 0417 247 546.*

## Labour Day Weekend Tour, 9–11 March 2019

Save the date! Our tour leader, Betty Huf, has graciously offered to lead us on a tour to Mount Gambier in South Australia.

Whilst planning is still in the very early stages, places which may be visited include the Tantanoola Caves, the Naracoorte Caves, the Englebrecht Cave and Port MacDonnell.

*For enquiries and bookings, contact tour leader, Betty Huf, Tel. (03) 5572 4959; email [bettyhuf@westvic.com.au](mailto:bettyhuf@westvic.com.au) More details will be provided in our next Newsletter.*





## Past events



*Silo art at Rupanyup featuring two local young sportspeople, Ebony Baker and Jordan Weidemann.*

### Labour Day Weekend Tour to Horsham, 10–12 March 2018

The tour to the Wimmera and Mallee districts of Victoria, led by Betty Huf, was a resounding success. A total of 37 people attended part or all of the activities on the itinerary. We visited historic sites in the area, including Rupanyup, Murtoa and Green Lake. One of the highlights was the Silo Art Tour. The portraits of local identities on disused grain silos are very impressive. We were all in awe of the talent of the artists who were able to paint with such precision the features of their subjects on such a large scale, despite very challenging environmental conditions. Below is John Noack's tour report.

The Society's 2018 Wendish Country Tour began on 10 March with a picnic lunch at the lunch shelter in the main street of Rupanyup. This town's name is an Aboriginal word meaning "branch hanging over water". The tour continued with a visit to the

Rupanyup Silo, which has been painted by Siberian artist Julia Volchkova with the images of two young sportspeople in the Rupanyup district, Ebony Baker and Jordan Weidemann. The task of painting was aided by the projection of enlarged images onto the silos but was hindered by unwelcomed rain and by winds which tended to blow the paint back into the artist's face.

The visit to the Woods' Farming and Heritage Museum, at 109 Wimmera Highway, enabled the Tour participants to take a nostalgic walk down memory lane, as they viewed the vast collection of household and farming items, dating back to the early 1900s. The Museum was built by brothers Michael and John Woods. The most common comment to be heard was, "We used to have one of those!" Many household items from the mid-1900s, including pedal sewing machines, wringer washing machines, water coolers, kerosene refrigerators, record players, colourful biscuit tins and even musical harps, clearly evoked many memories!



---

*Clockwise from main: 1. Interior of Murtoa's Stick Shed. 2. Vintage household utensils in Woods' Farming and Heritage Museum, Rupanyup. 3. Silo art at Brim depicting four characters, typical of hardy country people of the Wimmera-Mallee.*

---

Murtoa, which means “home of the lizard” then provided four interesting features for inspection. The Murtoa Cemetery was the last resting place of the ancestors or relatives of some participants and Richard Krelle was able to answer the usual sort of questions when they were raised, such as “Where is [name supplied] buried?” or “Is [name supplied] buried here?”

After making our own departure by car, we then discovered that Murtoa’s “Stick Shed” was not a small shed for storing sticks but a huge shed, which was built in 1941 as a war-time emergency facility for grain storage. It has even been called “The Cathedral of the Wimmera!” It is 270 m in length and 60m in width. It soars to 19m in height and was constructed using 560 native mountain ash poles. Although 22 such sheds were originally built, Murtoa’s Shed is the only one that still remains and it is now a national-heritage listed building.

The Water Tower Museum was originally the 1886 Railways water tower. Its three floors now contain local historical items and artefacts, including the famous James Hill taxidermy collection of over 700 birds and other fauna and also the sad story of the two students from the Murtoa College who drowned in the local Lake Marma.

Next to the Tower is Concordia Cottage, which is the last remaining section of the original Concordia College, established in Murtoa in the 1890s. On display are items relevant to the College and to the District, including wedding dresses, a reed organ and an old telephone switchboard.

The Railway Hotel was the venue for the evening meal and the diners, including those who ordered Barramundi, all indicated their satisfaction with their selection from the Menu.

On Sunday morning, 11 March, the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Horsham was the venue for





*Clockwise from top left: 1. Photo display in Concordia Cottage. 2. Murtoa's Water Tower Museum, with the bell from the former Concordia College in the foreground. 3. Vintage sewing machines in Woods' Farming and Heritage Museum, Rupanyup. 4. Betty Huf playing the tenor horn in Murtoa's Stick Shed. 5. Murtoa's old manual telephone exchange. Centre photo: Norelle Huf, Betty Huf and Denis Huf at Hopetoun Lutheran Church.*

taking part in the contemporary worship service and for meeting the parishioners during Morning Tea. The participants then boarded the bus to continue the Silo Tour.

The silo at **Sheep Hills** depicts the Aboriginal Elder Aunty Regina Hood and a Wergaia man, Uncle Ron Marks. They were painted by the Melbourne artist Adnate. Ron Marks was pleased with the inclusion of the stars, which played an important role in the lives of his ancestors. We stopped for lunch, which was based on a set menu, at the Creekside Hotel at **Warracknabeal**, which means "big red gums". The Tour then continued with our Guide Noel Kruger, who provided much useful information about the countryside and about the painted silos.

**Brim**, meaning "spring of water", features silos painted by Australian artist Guido van Helten. The characters on display are not specific individuals but depict four anonymous persons, who are typical of the hardy country people of the Wimmera.

The **Rosebery** silos add a symbolical dimension in the depiction of both human and animal images. The Melbourne artist Katie Kaff-eine has been engaged in various international projects and, since she likes to explore symbols, she presents a blending of the man with a horse and the lady with a sheep. This blending expresses visually the relationship between humans and the land.

At **Hopetoun**, Denis and Norelle Huf provided some information about Hopetoun's St John's Lutheran Church. Pastor Oscar Mueller visited this area in the late 1800s and conducted services



at Rosebery. The Hopetoun church was originally bought from the Methodists but, during the First World War, it was burned down. It has been a part of several different parishes, including the Rainbow parish.

**Patchewollock** means “plenty of porcupine grass” and its silos, which were painted by artist Fintan Magee from Brisbane, depict two features: a local “reserved wheat and sheep farmer” named Nick Hulland and a tree which is dying but also reveals new green growth. Such realistic images help to relate humanity to nature.

This town is also home to the “Big Malleefowl”, a giant corrugated iron sculpture located near the old Railway Station. Unfortunately, real Malleefowl are not so easy to find. The nearby Wyperfeld National Park is one of the few remaining areas providing habitat for these endangered birds.

**Lascelles** gained its name from the “Father of the Mallee”, Edward Harewood Lascelles. Its silos were painted by the Melbourne artist Tyrone Wright, who required about 200 litres of house paint to complete this task. His subjects were Geoff and Merrilyn Horman, who were born and bred in this district, married there in 1967 and have worked on the land as wheat farmers.

After this Silo Tour, we enjoyed an **evening meal at Horsham**, which was prepared for us by the ladies of the Horsham Lutheran congregation. After this meal, the Wends of Australia were instructed by Colin and Betty Huf in the art of decorating **Easter eggs**, as practised for many centuries by the Wends of Lusatia. There are three traditional egg-decoration techniques, which include waxing, scratching and etching. We settled for “texta-ing” or employing coloured texta pens. Fortunately, the suggested pat-



1. “Big Malleefowl” sculpture at Patchewollock.
2. Silo art at Rosebery depicting the relationship between humans and the land.

---

terns supplied for copying, helped greatly in the production of less than perfect and rather amateurish decorated eggs. There was certainly no suggestion that these Australian works of art would be exported overseas to Lusatia!

On Monday 12 March we visited the **Green Lake Cemetery**, which contains headstones and memorials to the **Gormann, Gross, Kroker, Kuehne, Matuschka, Peucker, Starick, Uebergang, Winderlich** and other families. This area featured congregations from two different Lutheran Synods with two separate church buildings: (1) the Bethlehem Church (1871-1966) and (2) the Drung Drung and later St Mark’s Church (1873-1971). The problems and relocations of buildings, which arise when congregations have two separate Church buildings but share only one Cemetery, are very well demonstrated at Green Lake. Desiring a Cemetery next to a Church building is certainly a common European, Germanic and Wendish tradition.





*Silo art portraying Geoff and Merrilyn Horman looking over their home town of Lascelles.*

After settlers first arrived in the Wimmera in 1869, land for the **Bethlehem Lutheran Church** was acquired in 1871. The church was built in 1872 as a slab and pug building next to the Cemetery. In 1885, on a site closer to most of the settlers and located about 3 miles south of the Cemetery, a new weatherboard church building was erected. During the week, this building also served as a School. A cyclone destroyed this church in 1897 but it was soon rebuilt. In 1908, the congregation relocated northwards and this Bethlehem church was moved to the congregation's original land next to the Green Lake Cemetery. Green Lake School Teachers included Ern **Eckert** and Elisabeth **Darsow**. The Bethlehem Church became part of the Horsham Lutheran parish and it finally closed in 1966. An inscribed plaque now marks the location of this weatherboard Bethlehem Church.

The **Drung Drung (later St Marks) Lutheran Church**, which could seat 200 people, was erected

on land acquired from B. Scheetz and it was located about 3 miles to the east of the Cemetery. It was dedicated by Pastor Hermann Herlitz from the Victoria Synod in 1873. In 1879, this weatherboard building was moved to a site across the road from the Green Lake Cemetery and it was then called the Green Lake Church. In 1926, this St Marks congregation moved to a new site north-west of the actual Green Lake, which had been donated by A. Peucker. This congregation was mostly part of the Natimuk parish. It eventually closed in 1971 and the building was carted away to Walpeup in 1973.

The Tour group then visited the site of the **State School No. 1519 at Drung Drung**, which operated from 1914 to 1970 and which some of the Tour participants, including June Winter, attended. However there had also been an earlier School in the district, from 1875 to 1899. June Winter gave us information on the history of the area, including **Gross** family history. Friedrich Gross was only seventeen when he left Prussia, voyaging to Australia with the **Müller** family on the *Wilhelmsburg* in 1853. They first settled at Germantown, now Grovedale. Friedrich later married Eleanore **Müller** and the families became pioneers of Drung Drung. Friedrich and Eleanore Gross are buried in the Green Lake Cemetery. A bridge across the Wimmera River and a road in this area now bear the name "Gross".

Our weekend concluded with a tour led by Daryl Deutscher of his **Deutscher's Turkey Farm** at Dadswells Bridge. Daryl explained and demonstrated the process of raising turkeys from eggs to being candidates for Christmas Dinner. He also pointed out his practice of moving and providing new ground and fresh grass for his flocks of free-range and endlessly gobbling turkeys.

Lunch was available just across the highway at the Café of the **Giant Koala Tourist Complex** and some of Daryl's turkey meat was on the menu as turkey burgers.

We are very grateful to Betty Huf for her meticulous planning and organisation of the tour. We also thank Richard Krelle (Murtoa Cemetery), Colin Huf (bus driver for the 400 km Silo Art Tour), Noel Kruger (silo trail), Denis and Norelle Huf (Hopetoun), June Winter, Kevin Matuschka and Jenny Gellatly (Drung Drung / Green Lake) and Daryl Deutscher (Deutscher's Turkey Farm) for their special contributions towards this very memorable weekend.

JOHN NOACK

*We gratefully acknowledge John Noack, Clay Kruger and Mick Ampt for contributing photos of the March Tour to the Wimmera-Mallee. Special thanks to John Noack for his Tour report.*



## Annual General Meeting, Saturday 7 April 2018

We are very pleased to report that our AGM on 7 April was very successful. We thank those who attended the Meeting or appointed proxies and those who sent greetings and messages of support.

We had 16 people in attendance and 46 proxies. The following Office Bearers and Committee Members were re-elected: President **Betty Huf**; Vice-President **John L. Modra**; Secretary **Glenys Wollermann**; Treasurer **Rob Wuchatsch**; Committee Members **Janice Blackburn**, **Joel Blackburn**, **Mary Cooper**, **Clay Kruger**, **Beryl Nagorcka** and **Moira Nagorcka**.

Rob Wuchatsch presented the Annual Financial Statement for 2017. He reported that we had a successful year. The total credit monies held in accounts as at 31 December 2017 was \$16,533.06. It was decided that there will be no increase in membership fees for the coming year. The number of members of our Society has remained fairly stable, at about 270. Rob Wuchatsch is ably assisted by Clay Kruger in managing our Society's finances. Clay's role is that of Assistant Treasurer, managing the online banking and maintaining membership records.

In her President's Report, Betty Huf stated that throughout 2017 our Society's activities were blessed with renewed vigour and enthusiasm, and as a Committee we were particularly encouraged by the interest shown by members who have previously not attended our events.

In order to make attendance easier for our Western District and Wimmera members, our Annual Luncheon was held in Ballarat on 21 October 2017. There were 38 participants, including three from Adelaide and, as hoped, a number of "first timers" from country Victoria. Great interest was shown in Betty Huf's presentation on the Wendish settlers of the Western District of Victoria. The success of this

event has encouraged us to choose Ballarat as our venue again for this year's Luncheon.

The second event our Society organised was the annual Labour Day weekend tour, which this year visited the Horsham area. Betty gave details on the sites visited and activities held on this very popular and successful tour.

Betty flagged our upcoming events: our Annual Luncheon to be held in Ballarat on 27 October 2018 and our Labour Day Weekend Tour in March 2019. The proposed destination is the Mount Gambier area in South Australia.

In conclusion, Betty thanked all Committee members for their support and for their contribution to the successful functioning of our Society in the areas of our Annual Dinner, our March Tour, our Newsletters and Website, our Library and our Treasury and Secretarial portfolios. Their efforts on behalf of the Society are gratefully appreciated.

### Thank you to our donors

We sincerely thank our members who have made donations to the work of our Society, in addition to paying for their memberships. The following are the members whose donations were received from 1 September 2017 to 31 July 2018:

*R. Albert, G. Allen, J. Ballinger, R. Bee, R. Bransdon-Parkes, D. Brinkmann, D. Brown, J. Burger, C. Comas, M. Dalziel, B. Davies, D. Deutscher, P. Eagles, J & W Edwards, C. Elmore, C. Green, E. Gorman, J. Grosse, A. Handreck, H. Handreck, E. Hayden, S. Hayward, D. Herbig, J & A Hoffmann, T. Humphries, R. Jarick, J & A Keller, J. Kolloche, M. Kramer, J. Lange, A. Lueders, Y. Mibus, I. Mirtschin, M. Modra, T. Modra, R & M Moller, B & M Nagorcka, H. Oliver, J. Pearce, J. Pelchen, A. Proposch, P. Richardson, M. Robson, N. Rose, B. Ross, E. Rouch, J. Scheetz, J. Schilg, S & A Simpfendorfer, G. Uebergang, B. Van Elst, V. Wehner, J. Williams, J. Zwar.*

*Please note: Membership invoices for 2019 are enclosed with this Newsletter.*

## Birthday Greetings to Clay Kruger

Congratulations to our Society's elder statesman, **Clay Kruger**, on celebrating his 86th birthday on 23 July 2018. We are very grateful to Clay for his continued dedication and efficiency in his role as Assistant Treasurer, along with many other tasks behind the scenes.







# Research

Kevin Zwar continues to help with research queries from all over the world. In recent months he has answered queries regarding the following families: **Renzow**, **Huppatz**, **Kilo/Kihlo/Kinlow**, **Schilka**, **Singe**, **Dubrau/Dubrow**, **Seidel**, **Duschke/Duschka**, **Kalauka/Kalauke**, **Stindt**, **Zwar**, **Michel** and **Paschke**.

Rob Wuchatsch has been working on his **Wuchatsch** family history book, due to be published in October. He has also helped with other family history enquiries, including the **Renzow** family.

Betty Huf has continued working on the **Oelsnik** family history and helping with the **Rentsch** and **Hundrack** family history research. Betty has prepared a tour itinerary for **Gertrud Mahling** (Trudla Malinkowa), author of *Shores of hope*, who is visiting Australia in October and November this year. She has also organized a homeland tour in 2020 for the **Habel** and **Mirtschin** families and friends.

## New publication: *Five Centuries: the Wends and the Reformation*

As advertised in our March 2018 newsletter, our Society has a number of copies available for purchase. If you wish to purchase a copy, please send an email to [wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au) or write to The Secretary, Wendish Heritage Society Aust. Inc., P.O. Box 4050, Box Hill South, Vic. 3128.

## Wendish settlers of the Western District of Victoria

*Great interest was shown when Betty Huf spoke about the Wends of the Western District at our Annual Luncheon in Ballarat in October 2017. Below is a summary of Betty's presentation.*

In 1852, a group of 'German' families arrived at Portland Bay after travelling overland from the Barossa region in South Australia.

Of this first group, there was only one German family (Huf); all the rest were the Wendish families of **Albert**, **Burger**, **Deutscher**, **Hundrack**, **Mirtschin**, **Petschel** and **Rentsch**. As most of them came from villages that were in the Lutheran Parish of *Hochkirch* in Saxony, they understandably gave the name of their former parish, *Hochkirch*, to their new settlement in Australia. Amongst themselves, the people used the Wendish version of *Hochkirch* which was *Bukecy*, but as the German language

became dominant in their new Australian community, the Wendish name disappeared. It is interesting to note that Wendish families were responsible or instrumental for the establishment of all the early German Lutheran farming communities in the Western District, namely *Hochkirch*, *Gnadenenthal*, *Neukirch* (*Byaduk*) and *Tabor*.

### 1. *Hochkirch (Bukecy)*

In 1852, while they were still in South Australia, the Wends **Andreas Albert**, **Peter Burger**, **Andreas Deutscher**, **Johann Gude**, **Johann Hundrack**, **Gotthelf Petschel** and **Johann Rentsch** signed a Call to Missionary C. W. Schürmann to be their Pastor at the new settlement they planned to establish in Victoria.

Upon arrival at Portland, no land was available for purchase, so in 1853, with the assistance of the newly arrived Pastor Schürmann, the Wendish families bought allotments near the Grange (later known as Hamilton). On one of them, purchased by the group for religious purposes, a wattle and daub church was built and a Lutheran congregation was established. Schürmann also conducted a school in the building for a number of years.

The founding members were the **Deutscher**, **Hundrack**, **Petschel** and **Rentsch** families and the sole German family of **Huf**. This allotment is still owned by the Lutheran Church and is the site of the South Hamilton Cemetery, where many of these early settlers are buried.

From 1854 onwards, many more Wendish and German families moved to the Western District from both South Australia and the Melbourne areas, being attracted by the availability of extensive rich farming soils in the area. Soon the church became too small, so a larger one was built several kilometres south-east in 1858, which was again superseded by a larger bluestone building in 1863. Around these church buildings, the community of *Hochkirch* was established.

A separate Lutheran congregation was established in 1859 by the **Deutscher**, **Petschel** and **Rentsch** families after differences of opinion arose with Pastor Schürmann. A red-brick church, which still stands today within the boundary of the Hamilton Pastoral Museum, was erected on land donated by Michael **Deutscher**.

Wends who later settled in the *Hochkirch* district were **Johann Poldrack**, **J.C.A. Krüger**, **Johann Zschech**, **Peter Zieschang**, **Christian Nagorcka**, **Christian Harnath**, **George Gassan**, **Christian**



**Starick, Christian Duschka, Matthes Doman, Johann Biesse, Martin Towk, Christian Hussock, Johann Lehmann, Martin Kalauka, Christian Gulbin, Christian Nossack, George Kschammer, Johann Krause, and Carl August Dahlitz.**

## 2. Gnadenthal

The Wendish families who established the community of Gnadenthal were those of **Andreas Albert, Peter Bürger, Michael Schmidt, Andreas Urban, Johann Mirtschin, Johann Christoph Hempel** and **Carl August Hempel**.

Because land in the Hamilton area was too expensive for them, some of the original group of Wendish farmers settled on cheaper land 30 kilometres away near Penshurst in 1854.

They named their small community Gnadenthal, which means Valley of Grace. Here they initially assisted each other to build small wattle and daub cottages, which were later replaced by more substantial bluestone homes as their prosperity grew. One of the original cottages still stands on Peter Bürger's farm, and has been set up as a family museum which houses relics from the early days of the community.

Although Pastor Schürmann regularly visited Gnadenthal to conduct worship services, a formal congregation was not established. The families joined the Tabor Congregation when it was formed in 1860.

## 3. Neukirch (Byaduk)

By the time that the first Lutheran church was built at Byaduk in 1866, there were already at least 17 Lutheran families living in the area, all of them Wendish except for one. Some of these families purchased adjoining allotments in 1860, and were joined by more families in later years.

Wendish families who lived at Neukirch were **Johann Rentsch Jnr, Martin Towk, Christian and Johann Salzke, Mathes Jeitz, Adolph & Rudolph Pertz, Johann Höna, Christian Bramke, Johann Schlemmer, Martin Pumpa, Martin Kotzur, Martin Kosch, Johann Kilo, Mathes Handreck, Johann Gude** and **Christian Nickel**.

Pastor C. W. Schürmann visited a number of times a year because the majority of the Neukirch Lutherans had been members of his congregation at Hochkirch. The Pumpa, Salzke, Kotzur and Kilo families moved to the Gerogery district in New South Wales towards the end of the 1860s and were joined by the Pertzels several years later.

Other families left throughout the 1870s, halving the number of people in the congregation. However the core Wendish families of Rentsch, Handreck and Kosch, together with other Lutheran families who settled in the area, kept the congregation going until diminishing numbers resulted in the closure of Zion Lutheran Church, Byaduk, in 2006.

## 4. Tabor (Croxtton)

Land was offered for sale in the Croxtton district in 1858, some of which was purchased by Wendish and German settlers who formed a Lutheran congregation in the area in 1860 which they named Tabor.

Amongst the Wendish settlers only the Matuschka family stayed, with their original selection still occupied by descendants. The Gnadenthal Wends joined the Tabor congregation, with many descendants of these early families still worshipping at the Tabor church today.

Wends who settled in the Tabor area were **Christian Matuschka, Matthies Zoelner, Christian Voigt, Martin Scheetz, Mathies Gardi, Martin Lehrack, Martin Mudra, Matthies Scheetz, Martin Nowotna** and **Albin Starick**.

After living in western Victoria for a number of years, some of the Wendish families moved to America. They were **Matthes Doman, George Gassan, Peter Zieschang** and **Matthies Zoelner**.

To date, some 54 Wendish families have been identified as having lived for a period of time in the Western District of Victoria. In the mid-1800s, this was a significant presence for a little-known group of 19th century European immigrants to Australia.

The following are the known Wendish families that settled in Victoria's Western district at some stage. It does not include the maiden names of married women, which would make the list even more extensive: **Albert, Biesse, Bramke, Burger, Dahlitz, Deutscher, Doman, Duschka, Gardi, Gassan, Gude, Gulbin, Handreck, Harnath, Heine, Hempel, Höna, Hundrack, Hussock, Jeitz, Kalauka, Kilo, Kosch, Kotzur, Krause, Krüger, Kschammer, Lehrack, Lehmann, Matuschka, Mirtschin, Mudra, Nagorcka, Nossack, Nowotna, Nickel, Pertz, Petschel, Poldrack, Pumpa, Rentsch, Salzke, Scheetz, Schlemmer, Schmidt, Starick, Stephan, Stojan, Towk, Voigt, Urban, Zieschang, Zollner** and **Zschech**.

BETTY HUF





# Tribute to Lois Mirtschin



## Lois Marie Mirtschin

**25 September 1930 – 22 February 2018**

Lois Marie Mirtschin was born at Penshurst, Victoria on 25 September 1930, the youngest child of Adolph and Sophie Ida Mirtschin (nee Tischler). She was a sister to Sheila and twin brothers, Basil and Ivan.

Lois was a member of the Tabor Lutheran congregation and received her education at the Tabor Lutheran School and later at the Hamilton High School.

In 1949, at the age of 18, Lois commenced her General Nurse Training at the Hamilton Base Hospital, where in 1952 she received the Matron Gwladys Thomas Memorial prize for the most outstanding Nurse of her 3 year training course. She then completed her Midwifery training at Crown St Women's Hospital in Sydney, afterwards moving to Melbourne where she undertook a course in Psychiatric Nursing at Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital in Parkville, as well as Infant Welfare training at Tweddle Baby Hospital in Footscray.

In 1954 Lois's love of Nursing took her to the outback of South Australia where she started working at the Koonibba Aboriginal Mission as Sister in Charge of the Hospital. Later, she accepted a position at the Yalata Aboriginal Mission, commencing in January 1958. She received wonderful support for her work from her home congregation at Tabor whenever she returned home for a holiday and told of her work using slides to illustrate what her life was like at Yalata.

In February 1970 Lois moved to the Hopevale Mission in Queensland and in September of that year transferred to Bloomfield Aboriginal Community where she stayed for 8 years. Her duties included running medical clinics where she cared for mothers and babies, monitoring and recording the rainfall, running the store, teaching Sunday school, operating the community bank and working the two way radio. Her mode of transport from one clinic to the next was by boat when the Bloomfield River flooded, as during the wet season the roads were



1.&2. Lois Mirtschin.

3. Lois giving medication to Aboriginal women at Yalata in the 1960s.

impassable. There was no telephone and conditions were very basic; contact with the Flying Doctor was by two way radio. Lois loved her time at Bloomfield and a street in Wujal Wujal has been named *Lois Street* in recognition of her service to the community.

In 1978, at the age of 48, Lois returned to live in Hamilton, caring for her elderly Mother while working as Associate Charge Nurse of the Midwifery Department at the Hamilton Hospital.

In her retirement Lois loved to travel throughout Australia with her sister Sheila, whom she considered to be her best friend. They were inseparable until Sheila's death in August 2012 and Lois found this change in circumstances extremely hard.

Even so, Lois was able to remain in her Independent Living Unit at Eventide due to the support of her friends, family and community services, for which she was always very grateful. She often said "I live alone but I am not lonely". On Friday February 2, after a fall, Lois was admitted to Hospital where her health declined and she was peacefully taken to her Heavenly Home on February 22 surrounded by her loved ones. Lois was a very gracious, independent, generous and unassuming lady. She will be sadly missed by her brother Ivan, sister-in-law Joan, her eight nephews and nieces and their families.

THIS TRIBUTE WAS WRITTEN BY ANDRE STEELE,  
A NIECE OF LOIS MIRTSCHIN



## Vale

**Alf Handreck** of Mildura, Victoria died in June 2018, aged 86 years. His funeral was held in Mildura on 29 June 2018. We extend our sincere sympathy to his wife Gwyn and family.



**Lena Mirtschin** died on 1 August 2018, aged 88 years. She grew up on a farm near Peshurst in Western Victoria, one of eight children of Carl and Sophie Mirtschin. She is survived by one sister, Orris Lennon. Lena's

funeral was held in Ballarat on 8 August 2018. We extend our sincere condolences to her family and friends.

**Dieter Mittasch** of Oak Park, Victoria died on 19 June 2018, aged 80 years. His funeral was held in Essendon on 27 June 2018. We extend our condolences to his wife Marta and family.

We are very grateful for the support these loyal members gave our Society over many years.

## Directory

**Aims:** The Wendish Heritage Society Australia Inc., researches and promotes the Wendish/Sorbian and Germanic heritage and family history in Australia.

**Postal Address:** P.O. Box 4050, Box Hill South, Victoria 3128

**Meeting Room and Research Centre:** St Aidan's Community Centre, 12 Surrey St, Box Hill South, Victoria. (Melway 61 C1)

**Hours:** By appointment. Please contact the Secretary.

**Our Society Logo:** The logo, an Australian gum leaf and a Lusatian linden leaf, represent the connection between the Wendish descendants in Australia and the Sorbs in Lusatia.

**Membership & Newsletter Subscription:** \$35 for single membership and \$40 for joint membership for one calendar year due at the start of each year. The form is included in our September Newsletter for the following year. Additional donations can also be made for the expanding work of the Society and we thank most sincerely those of you who have made such generous donations.

**Publicity:** We welcome any publicity which you can give about our Society and its planned events.

**Newsletter Design:** Robyn Zwar Design, [www.robynzwardesign.com](http://www.robynzwardesign.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** Glenys Wollermann

**Librarian:** Janice Blackburn

**Website Consultant:** Joel Blackburn

### Office bearers:

**President:** Betty Huf, PO Box 26, Tarrington, Vic 3301  
Tel: 03 5572 4959 Email: [bettyhuf@westvic.com.au](mailto:bettyhuf@westvic.com.au)

**Vice-President and Computer and Website Consultant:**  
John L. Modra, 24 Moore St, Colac, Vic 3250 Tel: 0488 219 252  
Email: [riskwithinreason@gmail.com](mailto:riskwithinreason@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Glenys Wollermann, 22 Bellara Street, Doncaster, Vic 3108. Tel: 03 9891 6652  
Email: [wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au)

**Treasurer:** Robert Wuchatsch, Stony Rises Homestead, 2020 Princes Hwy, Pirron Yallock, Vic 3249.  
Mobile: 0400 127 830 Email: [robert.wuchatsch@gmail.com](mailto:robert.wuchatsch@gmail.com)

### Committee Members:

**Janice Blackburn:** 2 Astley St, Lower Templestowe, Vic. 3107. Tel: 03 9850 5766. *Librarian.*

**Joel Blackburn:** same address as Janice Blackburn.

**Mary Cooper**

**Clay Kruger:** Good Shepherd Retirement Village, Unit 16/1-5 City Road, Ringwood, Vic 3134  
Tel: 03 8838 8737 Email: [ck\\_32@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ck_32@optusnet.com.au)

**Beryl Nagorcka:** 39 Kenilworth Crescent, Glen Waverley, Vic 3150 Tel: 9802 6487 Email: [bnagorcka@bigpond.com](mailto:bnagorcka@bigpond.com)

**Moira Nagorcka:** same address as Beryl Nagorcka.  
Email: [magina@bigpond.com](mailto:magina@bigpond.com)

**Wendish Heritage Society Australia Inc** ABN 78 951 996 351 Reg. A0031509R

PO Box 4050, Box Hill South, Victoria 3128

Kevin Zwar is willing to help with research enquiries. Email: [wendsonline@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wendsonline@optusnet.com.au)

Business Email: [wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au)

Website: [www.wendishheritage.org.au](http://www.wendishheritage.org.au)

*The Wendish Heritage Society Australia Inc. does not accept responsibility for the opinions expressed or the accuracy of the statements made by authors of articles published in this newsletter.*