



wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

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Clockwise from top left: 1. Gertrud Mahling of Bautzen, President Betty Huf, author Robert Wuchatsch and John Fry, President of the Friends of Westgarthtown, at the Wuchatsch family history book launch (see p. 9). 2. Merryl Robson and grandson Max Burder at the Annual Luncheon (see p.7). 3. Richard Albert and Geoff Matuschka at the Annual Luncheon. 4. Glenys Wollermann and Mick Ampt at the Cuckoo restaurant (see p. 5). 5. John and Ann Keller at the Annual Luncheon. 6. Bruce Burger and Gladys Koch at the Annual Luncheon.

Join our March Tour

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our Labour Day weekend tour to Mount Gambier in South Australia.

You do not need to be a member of our Society to join our Tour. See itinerary and booking details on page 2.

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Calendar of upcoming events

Labour Day Weekend Tour to Mount Gambier, 9–11 March 2019

Save the date! Our tour leader, Betty Huf, has graciously offered to lead us on a tour based at **Mount Gambier**, in South Australia, on 9–11 March 2019.

Please note that this is the Labour Day long weekend in Victoria. It is not a long weekend in South Australia, so there should be plenty of options for accommodation.



Many Germans were amongst the earliest settlers in the Mount Gambier district where they became successful farmers and businessmen. The largest influx was in the latter half of the 1850s.

Two Lutheran congregations were established; one led by Pastor Andreas Kappler and the other visited by Pastor Clamor Schürmann of Hochkirch, Victoria.



During our Tour, some of the places connected to these Germans will be visited, as well as the coastal town of Port MacDonnell. We will also go to the Tourist Information Centre to view the displays about Mount Gambier's geographic and settlement history; the Meischel

Park Lutheran Cemetery; the Lake Terrace Cemetery where Australia's only Wendish Pastor, Andreas Kappler, is buried; St Martin's Lutheran Church which was founded by Kappler; the Cave Gardens, Umpherston Sinkhole and Englebrecht Cave; the Blue Lake precinct, Mount Schank and Dingley Dell (Adam Lindsay Gordon's Cottage).

Please make your own arrangements for accommodation, as soon as possible.

Please book by 28 February with Betty Huf, PO Box 26, Tarrington, Victoria, 3301; Mobile 0439 724 959; email bettyhuf@outlook.com as bookings are desirable for some venues.

A more detailed program will be sent out to those who register. Please note that bettyhuf@outlook.com is Betty's new email address.

Annual General Meeting, Saturday 6 April 2019

Our Society's AGM will be held at 1.30 pm, followed by afternoon tea. All are welcome. The venue is our meeting room at **St Aidan's Community Centre, 12 Surrey St, Box Hill South, Victoria.**

We intend to consider a motion to adopt the 2012 Model Rules for our Society.

Proxies will be accepted. Please appoint a proxy if you are unable to attend, to ensure that we have a quorum for this important meeting. Please see the proxy form enclosed in this Newsletter. We need 26 members, including proxies, for a quorum. Committee members may be appointed as proxies eg. President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer or any of the Committee members listed in our Directory on page 12. Please post the proxy form to reach us by Friday 5 April.

Alternatively, you may email a message appointing a proxy to the address below. To appoint a proxy, please use the following wording:

"I,, being a paid member of the Wendish Heritage Society Aust. Inc., am unable to attend the AGM to be held on Saturday 6 April 2019. I appoint as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the meeting."

Please RSVP to Glenys Wollermann (Secretary)

Telephone: (03) 9891 6652

Email: wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au

Top: Australia's only Wendish pastor, Andreas Kappler, c. 1870.

Below: Dr Edward Wehl, Mount Gambier's first doctor.



Left: Gertrud Mahling at Ziebell's Farmhouse garden, Thomastown, Vic.

Right: Gertrud Mahling at the Burger Cottage, built in 1853 at Gnadenthal, near Peshurst, Vic.

Past events

Walla Walla 150th Anniversary Trek Re-Run, Sunday 7 October to Friday 12 October 2018

In 1868 the pioneers who settled Walla Walla left Ebenezer in South Australia and trekked overland to Walla Walla in NSW.

As part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations, a Trek Re-Run took place from 7–12 October 2018. This was a self-drive event which included trek history talks along the way. This event was a resounding success. Over 90 people participated in this very well run and interesting tour.

Gertrud Mahling's visit to Australia, 10 October to 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. Gertrud spent two weeks in South Australia, then two weeks in Victoria visiting Wendish sites in both states. Betty Huf prepared the itinerary for her Victorian visit. The following is Betty Huf's report:

Our Society was delighted to be offered the opportunity to host the Bautzen Wendish historian, Gertrud Mahling, from 26 October until 13 November 2018. After a handover by her

South Australian host at Naracoorte, she was taken to Mount Gambier to view the grave of Pastor Andreas Kappler, Australia's only Wendish pastor. Some sightseeing, viewing the Blue Lake and the Umpherston Sinkhole preceded the journey to Tarrington.

The following day, Gertrud was Guest Speaker at our Annual Luncheon held in Ballarat after which she travelled to Melbourne. Here she attended worship at the Doncaster Lutheran Church, followed by a trip to the Westgarthtown Pioneer Precinct where she launched Rob Wuchatsch's family history *Särka to Westgarthtown*. After a very interesting afternoon touring Ziebell's farmhouse, Thomastown Lutheran Church and Cemetery (where the Wendish families of Graf, Grützner, Wuchatsch, and Zimmer are buried), she spent time with her hosts on the following days visiting various places including our Wendish Library at Box Hill South. Kevin and Del Zwar, whom Gertrud had met in Germany, took her to visit some of the Zwar relatives.

Then followed a journey to the Western District where she was thrilled to visit the graves of Wendish pioneers in the cemeteries at Hochkirch/Tarrington (Deutscher, Harnath, Höna, Hundrack, Hussock, Kosch, Krause, Lehmann, Nagorcka, Petschel, Rentsch, Salzke, Stojan, Towk and Zschech), Tabor (Gardi, Krüger and Matuschka), Gnadenthal (Albert, Burger, Hempel, Kalauka, Mirtschin, Stephan and Urban) and Byaduk (Gude, Handreck, Höna, Jeitz and Schlemmer). Gertrud was famil-



1. Gertrud Mahling at the ruins of the Albert homestead at Gnadenthal, near Penshurst, Vic. 2. Gertrud Mahling photographing Andreas Kappler's grave in the Lake Terrace Cemetery, Mount Gambier, S.A.

iar with all of these people through her research of Wendish emigrants, and the reading of the letters that they wrote back to their families, prior to the publication of her book *Shores of Hope*. During a visit to the Tabor Lutheran church, she was delighted to see a bell which was made in 1887 at the foundry of Kleinwelka, a small village close to Bautzen. A climb to the top of Mount Rouse near Penshurst, gave Gertrud a wonderful view of the area, but made eating lunch rather difficult in the strong wind present on the day.

It was moving for her to visit the home built by Peter **Burger** and his family in 1853 and the **Andreas Albert** ruins at Gnadenthal, although the possibility of the presence of snakes in the hot weather stilted her exploration of the buildings and farmyards somewhat. Also, at Gnadenthal, she was enthralled to view the wooden trunks that Johann **Mirtschin** and his family brought with them. A visit was also made to Waltanna Farms, operated by the **Nagorcka** family who produce flax seed health food products. A visit to the former St Luke's Lutheran church in the Pastoral Museum grounds at Hamilton gave Gertrud an insight to the Wendish families of **Deutscher**, **Petschel**, **Zieschang** and **Rentsch**, who helped establish that congregation.

After attending Sunday worship at Tarrington, Gertrud's hosts took her to Horsham via the Grampians. At Halls Gap she was very interested to visit the Brambruk Cultural Centre where she

learned a little about the lives of the local Aboriginal people. This was followed by an interesting, but noisy, tour of Daryl Deutscher's turkey farm. In the following two days, cemeteries at Green Lake (**Starick**), Natimuk (**Duschka**, **Matschke**, **Lehrack** and **Klowss**), Dimboola (**Klowss** and **Starick**) and Warracknabeal (**Pietsch**) were visited. Headstones in the Murtoa cemetery (**Deutscher**, **Gulbin**, **Hempel**, **Nowotna**, **Petschel**, **Starick** and **Pumpa**) were so intriguing that Gertrud forgot to look where she was standing and incurred the wrath of dozens of ants! In the Lutheran Church tower at Minyip, Gertrud viewed another bell, made at Kleinwelka in 1889.

Jindera in NSW was the next destination where local guides took her to visit the church and cemetery at St Peters, Gerogery (**Greschke**, **Kihlo**, **Salzke**, **Pumpa** and **Seiler**) where she was also able to get a feel for life of the Pastor and his family in the old manse built there in 1874. Bethel Church and cemetery (**Jarick**) were visited next and then the St John's cemetery (**Jeitz**) and Bethlehem cemetery (**Bartsch**, **Matuschka** and **Pannach**) both in Jindera. The Jindera Museum was of great interest to Gertrud as she was able to see how the early settlers of the area lived, the types of homes that they built and the farming implements they used.

The following day Gertrud visited Zion Lutheran Church at Walla Walla and then St Paul's Lutheran College where she was interested to see that three of the buildings were named after the Wendish



Top row: 1. Kevin Zwar, Gertrud Mahling, Janice and Joel Blackburn. 2. Gertrud Mahling and Dr Richard Zwar viewing archives and photos at the Royal Melbourne Hospital of surgeon Dr Bernard Zwar. Bottom row: 1. Gertrud Mahling and James Nagorcka at Waltanna Farms, near Hamilton, Vic. 2. Committee luncheon at the Cuckoo restaurant in Olinda, Vic.

families of **Kotzur**, **Lieschke** and **Wenke**. A visit to the Walla Walla cemetery followed where she photographed the graves of **Groch**, **Hennersdorf**, **Lieschke**, **Mickan**, **Hanschke**, **Radel**, **Scheetz**, and **Wenke**. After lunch a trip was made to visit the Alma Park cemetery where many of the **Kotzur** and **Lieschke** family members are buried. A visit to Morgan's Lookout gave a panoramic view of the district before returning to Walla Walla for a tour of the Kotzur plant which makes bulk handling and storage silos for the agricultural, mining and manufacturing enterprises.

The Kotzur family, present owners of 'Sunnyside' the original property of the Wenke family, hosted the group for a wonderful evening meal after first visiting the Walla Walla cairn which marks where the original settlers camped upon arrival in 1869. Then it was off to the Bowling Club where Gertrud gave her presentation, to a very interested group of over 50 locals.

After returning to Melbourne, Gertrud attended a Society Committee meeting held at the Cuckoo Restaurant in Olinda, after which the whole group

enjoyed lunch together. On her final Sunday in Melbourne, Gertrud attended worship in the city and then spent some time exploring. On the Monday, she was delighted to be taken to visit Bev Gotzky, whom she had met in Germany many years before. After some anxious moments regarding excess baggage due to many gifts of books, Gertrud finally left from Tullamarine on 13 November.

To enable her to remember everything that she saw and experienced in Australia, Gertrud spent time each day taking notes about the thousands of photos that she took during her sojourn here. We are thankful that she remained healthy throughout her hectic schedule and was interested in all that was presented to her. There is no doubt that, a result of her visit, Gertrud understands much more about the Wends who came to our shores, and that our ties with the Wends in Bautzen and Lusatia have been greatly strengthened.

BETTY HUF

We gratefully acknowledge Betty Huf and Kevin Zwar for contributing photos of Gertrud Mahling's visit. Special thanks to Betty Huf for her report.



The following is a message of thanks from Gertrud Mahling:

January 10, 2019

Thank you, dear Wendish friends in Australia!

From October 10 to November 13, 2018 I had the opportunity to visit the descendants of the Wendish immigrants to Australia. Geoff Saegenschnitter had invited me for such a visit for years, but because of personal reasons it was not possible to accept this invitation sooner. Together with the president of the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia, Lyall Kupke from Adelaide, and the Committee of the Society, Geoff organized my stay in South Australia till October 26, focused mainly on the **Barossa Valley** and the **Adelaide** area.

The second part of my visit was organized by the president of the Wendish Heritage Society Australia, Betty Huf from **Tarrington**, together with the Committee of that Society. The stay in Victoria included also a visit to the German/Wendish sites in the **Western District** and the **Wimmera** as well as the **Walla Walla** district in New South Wales.

According to my interest, that was focused primarily in the traces that Wends left in the different Australian states and areas, my hosts together with the help of many others, organized a wonderful program. So, I was able to see the main Wendish places in Australia, the settlements and farms where the Wends lived, the churches where they worshipped and the cemeteries where they found their rest. It was moving to stand at the graves of many persons that I knew from the history of the Wendish emigration, which were familiar to me because I read their letters and knew therefore about their hardships and difficulties, as well as their joys and hopes in their new homeland.

It was also interesting to learn something about the work of the two Wendish Societies, about their efforts to keep the Wendish tradition in Australia. I am happy that I could visit the libraries and archives of both Societies in **Adelaide** and **Melbourne**, to see the old religious books in Upper and Lower Wendish, which the immigrants have taken with them from their homeland as spiritual food in their mother tongue, as well as the unique collections of newer publications about the Wends and their history.

It was a pleasure for me to meet members and Committee members of the Wendish Societies as well as of the historical Societies in the **Barossa Valley**, South Australia, and **Walla Walla**, New South Wales. I was pleased that my four talks on "The Wends (Sorbs) in Germany and in Australia" that I presented in Tanunda, Melbourne, Ballarat and **Walla Walla** found interested audiences. It was a special challenge for me, because they were my first talks in English.

I was honoured to launch the new book by Robert Wuchatsch, *Särka to Westgarthtown* in Ziebell's Farmhouse in **Westgarthtown**. And last, but not least, I was happy to meet so many kind people, who showed me around, drove many of hundreds kilometres with me, did a lot of organizing, hosted me in their homes, took me to interesting people, historical museums, memorial stones, old and young Wendish Linden trees, touristy places and special restaurants, shared their time with me, and did all that so well that I felt like I was at home.

Since I returned home in the middle of November I already have had the opportunity to inform the people in **Lusatia** about my Australian experiences. There have been two broadcasts of interviews with me on the Wendish radio, a short one of some minutes and a long one of a whole hour. The Saxon German newspaper published a whole page about my Australian research and visit. In December I presented my first speech on this topic in Bautzen; another speech will be held in February, also in Bautzen. On November 22 there was Robert Wuchatsch's German book launch in Bautzen. I am pleased that I could mediate contact to two Australian ladies, one interested in Wendish music, the other in the Wendish language. And I am happy that at the last possible date I was able to include Australia in a book about Wendish memorials that will be published in 2019.

My visit in October/November last year was my first stay in Australia. I am sure I will never forget it. It was only possible because of the kindness and support of many people in Australia. Therefore I cannot say anything but: Thank you, dear Wendish friends in Australia!"

*Gertrud Mahling / Trudla Malinkowa
Bautzen, Germany*



1. Ed and Gladys Koch at Ed's 90th birthday celebration. 2. Elizabeth and Greg Kraus at the Annual Luncheon. 3. President Betty Huf introducing the guest speaker at the Annual Luncheon.

Annual Luncheon, Sat 27 Oct 2018

This event, held for the second time in Ballarat, Victoria, was a resounding success. Special thanks to Gertrud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa) for being our guest speaker and for making this occasion such a memorable one. The following is John Noack's report:

The Society's Annual Luncheon provided the Wendish descendants and friends present with the opportunity to gather in the Lady Barkly Room at the Barkly Motorlodge in Ballarat and to enjoy meeting and chatting with fellow-diners. The buzz of conversation indicated clearly that much news and information was being shared and discussed.

The Luncheon menu options for the main meal included Battered Fish, Roast Pork, Apricot Chicken, Beef Lasagne and Pumpkin Risotto. Dessert options included Apple Sponge and Pavlova served with fruit and cream.

Some significant birthdays were also remembered. Mary Cooper informed the diners of the birthdays of Ed Koch, who was soon to be 90 years young, and of Betty Huf, who was soon to be 70 years young. The tributes indicated that both have been long-standing, loyal and hard-working members of the Society and the birthday cakes and candles confirmed the tributes.

The Guest Speaker, Gertrud Mahling, (or Trudla Malinkowa in the Wendish form), who was visiting Australia for four weeks from 10 October to 13 November 2018, conveyed greetings to our Society from Bautzen (see letter on page 8) She then presented an informative summary of the Wendish migrations from Lusatia to various locations in the world during the mid-1800s in the format of a well-illustrated PowerPoint presentation.

She reminded her audience that the Sorbs were the native people of East Germany and that they inhabited all of the former German Democratic Republic or DDR. However, for the last 1,000 years, they have lived under German statehood. They are the smallest Slavic nation. Their assimilation has created the problem of the gradual loss of the Wendish language and customs. It has also reduced the population of Wends, from about 160,000 in 1888 to about 30,000 in 2018.

The Wendish territory now consists only of Lusatia. The Lower or Northern Wends are included in the State of Brandenburg. Their capital is Cottbus and they speak lower Wendish. The Upper or Southern Wends are included in the State of Saxony. Their capital is Bautzen and they speak upper Wendish. Both capitals are located on the River Spree.

Religious changes in Lusatia took place at the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s. The Catholics in the pre-Reformation era made up nearly 100% of the Wends but in the post-Reformation period, about 90% of the Wends became Evangelical Lutherans. This change helped the Wends to develop their written language which resulted in the publication in 1728 of the Wendish Bible. By the 1850s, there was a national rebirth of Wendish books, newsletters, concerts, stage plays, singing festivals and the collection of traditional Wendish folklore.

National symbols were also created, including the Linden Tree; the national hymn or song "Beautiful Lusatia", or in Wendish, "Rjana Luzica" and the blue, red and white flag. In addition, national Wendish organisations were established.



Letter from the President of the Domowina

This letter was read out by Gertrud Mahling at the Annual Luncheon in Ballarat:

Bautzen, 4 October 2018

Dear Mrs Betty Huf, dear members of the Wendish Heritage Society,

Thanks to Mrs Trudla Malinkowa, who will be visiting you shortly, we have the opportunity to send you the warmest regards directly from Lusatia and the Domowina – Association of Lusatian Sorbs.

We are very proud of you and happy that you are part of our associated membership. We fully admire how you preserve the memory of your ancestors' home, their traditions and history, but also our common customs. The new possibilities after the fall of the Berlin Wall did much to help the relationship between yourselves and the people in Lusatia.

We believe that an active associative life, as is the case with the Wendish Heritage Society, despite the great distance from home, is important as an intellectual enrichment and orientation in our increasingly hectic everyday life. In this, our common intangible cultural heritage, our customs and beliefs connect us.

We hope that these customs are preserved as a particularly valuable treasure for and by future generations in Australia. The so-called new media, the internet and other digital channels make other ways of communication possible, thereby fostering a perhaps even closer relationship between you – as descendants of Sorbs/Wends, who emigrated a long time ago – and today's Sorbs/Wends in Lusatia.

New opportunities to learn our native language are possible, for example, using the “serbsce online” app or the international summer school, which is regularly offered by the Sorbian Institute and open to anyone interested.

Dear Mrs Betty Huf, dear members of the Wendish Heritage Society, once again warm greetings from Lusatia. Perhaps you'll visit us one day in Bautzen. We would be delighted if you did! Yet for now we would like to wish you a wonderful time with Mrs Malinkowa, and hope that you gain many new insights from her talks.

Warm regards,

David Statnik, President of the Domowina

The **Domowina** was founded in 1912 and the Serbski Dom or Wendish House in Bautzen, whose President is David Statnik, has 7,300 members. The Serbski Institut or Sorbian/Wendish Institute, undertakes research in relation to the Wendish language, history, customs, traditions and folklore. The Library and Archives here are viewed as being the “national memory of the Wendish people”.

Wendish church life involves both Catholics and Evangelical Lutherans and about 25 priests and pastors can speak Wendish fluently. The churches conduct worship services, organise radio broadcasts and publish literature. Religious customs in various churches include the Spring “Maypole”, the Harvest “Plucking the Cock”, Easter Riders or Krizerjo, who proclaim the Resurrection, and the Christmas “Child of God” or Zisetko.

Wendish emigration overseas included about 2,000 Wends to Australia; about 2,000 to Texas;

about 500 to other North American States and about 200 to Canada. The main reasons appear to be the desire (1) for social improvement; (2) for religious freedom and (3) to avoid the political unrest and the 1848 Revolution in Germany. In 1851, the “Helene” carried Johann **Zwahr**, Johann **Dalwitz** and others to Australia. They were labelled “The Evangelical-Lutheran Wendish Brethren” and are included in a photo which appears to have been taken before 1851, since it was taken in Germany.

Railway travel became possible during the 1840s. The Bahnhof or Railway Station at Bautzen was built between 1846 and 1850. Emigrants could travel to Hamburg and then wait in the Emigration Centre until their ship was ready to sail.

Travel by sea was a slow process. The Godeffroy's voyage to Australia, which included visiting South America for supplies, lasted about 4 months. Klemzig, which had been established in 1838 by Pastor August



Kavel's "Old Lutherans" from Prussia, was often used as a temporary staging post until suitable land was found. Bethany or Bethanien in the Barossa Valley was first settled in 1842. Wendish settlements included Ebenezer, Peter's Hill, St Kitts, Hochkirch/Tarrington, Gnadenthal/Penshurst, Byaduk and Walla Walla. Plans for a single large Wendish colony and the employment of a Pastor were thwarted by the scattered nature of the Wendish settlements and their small sizes. Kappler eventually moved to Mount Gambier, where he established the St Martin's congregation.

Old photos were shown depicting Andreas and Agneta Albert nee Heinze; Johann and Magdalena Rentsch; Johann and Maria Mirtschin, nee Gude; Johann and Anna Hundrack, nee Rentsch; Johann and Agneta Stephan nee Kaiser; Martin and Catherina Kosch, nee Pumpa and at St Kitts, Andreas and Magdalena Biar. A photo of the Lehmann family in 1910 included a "Gate of Garlands". Photos were also shown of the exterior and interior of the Burger family's early home, built in 1853 at Gnadenthal.

Research into Wendish migration has been conducted by Gerald Stone in his 1972 book, *The Smallest Slavonic Nation: The Sorbs of Lusatia*; by Rupert Burger in his 1976 *The Coming of the Wends* and by George Nielsen in his 1977 book, *In Search of a Home: nineteenth-century Wendish immigration*. In Australia, the Sorb Committee was set up in the early 1980s, followed by the Wendish Heritage Society Australia and the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia. Lyall Kupke recently presented some Australian history books to the Sorbian Institute.

Historical re-enactments include the 2012 re-enactment of the Trek from Rosedale in S.A. to Portland, Victoria in 1852; then to Hamilton in 1853; and the 2018 re-enactment of the Trek from Ebenezer in S.A. to Walla Walla in NSW, in 1868. The Wendish Pioneer Heritage Trail was launched in 2012. It consists of 6 interpretive signs erected at the main Wendish settlements in S.A.: Hope Valley, Rosedale, Peters Hill, Ebenezer, Neukirch and St Kitts.

Gertrud was asked about her experience of living in the DDR. She indicated that opinions stated in private conversations needed to be kept within the home. The Church's activities were watched by the DDR authorities and the citizens had almost no access to the world outside of the DDR. In the wider historical perspective, she reminded the audience that the period of time from 1949 to 1989, when Eastern Germany was under Socialism, was only 40 years. Gertrud's conclusion was "Danke für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit" or "Thank you for your attention".

The enthusiastic response to Gertrud's presentation indicated that all those present appreciated this very well-organised and informative talk. The President, Betty Huf, also expressed this sentiment in her words of gratitude and appreciation to Gertrud for fulfilling her role as Guest Speaker in such an excellent manner.

JOHN NOACK

We gratefully acknowledge Mick Ampt, Clay Kruger and Betty Huf for contributing photos of our Annual Luncheon. Special thanks to John Noack for his report.

Wuchatsch Family History Book Launch, Sunday 28 October 2018



Rob Wuchatsch signing at the launch of his family history book.

Rob Wuchatsch's family history book, *Särka to Westgarthtown: the Wuchatsch family in Germany and Australia*, was launched on Sunday 28 October at Ziebell's Farmhouse, German Lane, Lalor, Victoria. The following is Betty Huf's report:

Ziebell's farmhouse, in the Westgarthtown Pioneer Precinct in Melbourne, was the venue for the launch of this 525-page, copiously illustrated book, written by Robert Wuchatsch. It tells the story of the Wendish Wuchatsch family in Germany and Australia from the early 1700s, and covers in narrative style the lives of Johann, Hanna and Magdalene Wuchatsch and their descendants. Also included is a fascinating and somewhat poignant narrative of the members of the family who remained in Germany.

Rob began his research in 1970, taking almost 50 years to finally publish his Wuchatsch story. This is indicative of the amount of detail included, and the immensity of effort required to research in several languages. Rob made several overseas journeys and countless hours of meticulous research enabled



a detailed description of the family's development through history. Not only has the history of this particular family been recorded, but Rob has placed them into their historical context by giving detailed descriptions of the Särka village and surrounds, and the social, religious and political climate in which the family lived. An example of this detail is contained in the interesting fact that the family brought several cannon balls with them in their luggage to Australia. The explanation of the significance of these Wuchatsch 'treasures' can be read on pp 39-40.

An unusual inclusion in this book is Rob's account of the process he took to discover his family. He tells of his journeys back to Särka, his impressions and the emotions he felt, which he recorded in his diaries. He relates and notes in detail the Archives, sources and the people who helped him discover the information which provided the story of his family.

Gertrud Mahling, a visiting Wendish historian from Bautzen, launched the book and Betty Huf, on behalf of the Wendish Heritage Society of Australia, congratulated Robert 'Long ears' (see p. 14) on the successful publication of his Wuchatsch family history.

The book can be purchased by contacting Robert Wuchatsch. See contact details in the Directory on page 12.

BETTY HUF

Särka to Westgarthtown: The Wuchatsch Family in Germany and Australia should be read in conjunction with Rob's 1985 book *Westgarthtown: The German Settlement at Thomastown* and his 1999 book, *From Hamburg to Hobsons Bay: German Emigration to Port Phillip (Australia Felix) 1848-51*, the latter written with his friend and research colleague, Tom Darragh.

We gratefully acknowledge Clay Kruger, Kevin Zwar and Betty Huf for contributing photos of the book launch. Special thanks to Betty Huf for her report.

Talk on the Wends given to Narre Warren and Dist. F.H.G, 14 November 2018

Clay Kruger gave a PowerPoint presentation of his travels to Lusatia to the Narre Warren and District Family History Group on Wed. 14 November. The talk was held at the Cranbourne Library in Cranbourne, Victoria. About 20 people attended. All appreciated Clay's well-prepared presentation.

Ziebell's Farmhouse: Open Garden 17-18 November 2018

Ziebell's Farmhouse and heritage garden was open, as part of Open Gardens Victoria, on 17 and 18 November. Visitors were able to experience the homestead and the garden in its full glory.

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 took place from 25-28 January 2019. These celebrations included a range of entertainment, the Greater Hume Council Australia Day event, German style food and beer, a thanksgiving celebration, a community picnic lunch and a street parade.

Library

Visit by Nadine Williams to our Library

Journalist and author Nadine Williams OAM visited our Library on 3 January 2019 to research Australia's pioneering women, including her own ancestors in the Rathjen, Haeusler, Fiegert and Altus families. John Noack assisted Nadine to locate material relevant to her research. John's report on Nadine's visit will be published in our next edition of Wendish news.

Book for sale: *Five Centuries: the Wends and the Reformation*

An item on this book was published in our March 2018 newsletter. The book is selling well. We have a limited number of copies available. If you wish to purchase a copy, please send an email to: wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au or write to The Secretary, Wendish Heritage Society Aust. Inc., P.O Box 4050, Box Hill South, Vic. 3128.



Research

Kevin Zwar continues to be very active in handling research queries from all over the world. We are very grateful to Kevin for his continued dedication and efficiency. In recent months he has answered queries regarding the following families: **Scheetz, Krause, Werchon, Alexander, Dahlitz, Bohnsack and Decker.**

Robert Wuchatsch has completed his **Wuchatsch** family history book, a project that has been 50 years in the making. The book was launched in Melbourne on 28 October (see Betty Huf's report on page 9). It was also launched in Bautzen, Germany on 22 November. Parts of the book are in German as well as English so that Wuchatsch relatives in each country can read them.

Betty Huf prepared the Victorian tour itinerary for Gertrud Mahling (see report on page 3). She has organized our upcoming March tour to Mount Gambier, and a homeland tour in 2020 for the **Habel** and **Mirtschin** families and friends. Betty has also been assisting Karen Woodburn from New Zealand, who is organising a family tour to visit places relevant to the **Duschka /Duschke** and **Kalauka** families. Her group arrives in Adelaide on 23 Feb. and then travels across to Horsham, Hamilton and Melbourne.

Rob Wuchatsch, Betty Huf and Tom Darragh attended the German-Australian Genealogy and History Alliance Conference on 17-19 August 2018 at the University of Adelaide. They found the Conference very well run and very worthwhile.

General News

Birthday Greetings to Betty Huf

Congratulations to our Society's President, Betty Huf, on celebrating her 70th birthday on 22 December 2018. We are very grateful to Betty for her dedication in fulfilling her role as President, along with all the other work she does behind the scenes in organising our Annual Luncheons and our March tours. We could not hope for a better tour leader!

Birthday Greetings to Ed Koch

Congratulations to Ed Koch on celebrating his 90th birthday on 7 November 2018. A large number of family and friends enjoyed a celebratory afternoon tea held in Greensborough, Victoria on 24 November 2018. Ed is a former Committee member. We thank Ed for his support over many years.

Congratulations to Robert Wuchatsch

Congratulations to Rob Wuchatsch on winning the Don Grant Award for 2017 for the Best Australian Biography with a Family History Focus for his book, *John Muston: draper, squatter, speculator in colonial Australia*. Rob dedicated this book to his late wife, Margaret Gaye Wuchatsch, who was a descendant of John Muston. An item on this book was published in the September 2017 edition of *Wendish news*.



Ed Koch and Betty Huf cutting their birthday cakes at the Annual Luncheon.

Flooding of our Library

Heavy rain in November 2018 caused flooding in our Society's Library in Box Hill South. The carpet and some display boards were damaged. We sincerely thank John Noack for removing and cleaning the carpet and for repairing the damaged display boards.



Vale

The funeral service for **Colin Zschech** was held on 20 February 2018 in Adelaide, S.A.

Lois Lieschke (nee Blaess), wife of Allan Lieschke, died on 18 April 2018, aged 89 years.

Allan Lieschke died on 27 May 2018, aged 90 years. They were buried in Henty, NSW.

Ken Proposch died on 6 July 2018, aged 88 years. His funeral was held in Mount Martha, Victoria.

Errol Matuschka of Horsham, Victoria died on 9 September 2018, aged 85 years. He was buried at Green Lake Cemetery.

We are very grateful for the support these loyal members gave our Society over many years. We extend our condolences to their families and friends.

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.

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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.