



# wendish news

W E N D I S H   H E R I T A G E   S O C I E T Y   A U S T R A L I A

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*Bendigo Country Tour group in front of Main Altar and Sanctuary, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo. (See pages 3-6).*

## Invitation to our Annual Luncheon

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our Annual Luncheon on Saturday 28 October in Ballarat, Victoria. You do not need to be a member of our Society to attend the Luncheon. See booking details on page 2.

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# Calendar of upcoming events

## **Kotzur Reunion, 14–15 October 2023**

The journey of this family from Jänschwalde in Lower Lusatia began with Martin Kotzur and his wife Louise nee Towk.

They migrated to Australia in 1857 and moved to several regions, including Byaduk in Victoria; Gerogery, Alma Park and Pleasant Hills in NSW. Family members and friends of the Kotzur family are invited to attend this Reunion.

### **Saturday 14 October**

**Where:** Culcairn Bowling Club, Albury Rd, Culcairn, NSW

**When:** 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm Dinner

### **Sunday 15 October**

**Where:** Salem Lutheran Church, 1438 Alma Park Rd, Alma Park, NSW

**When:** 10.30 am

The Thanksgiving Service will be followed by a shared luncheon / sausage on bread at the Alma Park Hall. Please bring a plate of sandwiches or dessert to share.

You are encouraged to bring memorabilia for display eg. family photos, family tree information, old family Bibles, certificates.

### **RSVP: 20 September 2023**

*Reply on Facebook: Kotzur Family Reunion*

*Graeme Wenke:*

*Email graywenks@hotmail.com*

*Mobile 0427 327 215*

*Vanessa Withers:*

*Email vanessa\_kotzur@hotmail.com*

*Mobile 0403 142 186*

## **\*\* Annual Luncheon in Ballarat, Saturday 28 October 2023\*\***

Our Luncheon will start at 12.00pm for 12.30pm at Maple Palace (formerly Barkly restaurant) at Barkly Motorlodge, 43 Main Road, Bakery Hill, Ballarat. All are welcome.

Guest Speakers Betty and Colin Huf will give a presentation on “Easter in Lusatia”, from their own experience on their recent Tour.

*Please book by Saturday 21 October 2023 with Glenys Wollermann*

*Tel: (03) 9891 6652 or 0481 150 994*

*Email: g.wollermann@y7mail.com*

*Bookings are essential.*

## **Labour Day Weekend Tour, 9 – 11 March 2024**

*To be advised.*

## **Annual General Meeting, Saturday 27 April 2024**

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

*Contact: Glenys Wollermann (Secretary)*

*Tel: (03) 9891 6652*

*Email: g.wollermann@y7mail.com*

## **175th Anniversary Celebrations in 2025 of the Arrival of the Pribislaw and establishment of Westgarthtown**

*Date to be advised.*

## **Genealogist and Family Researcher in Germany**

Sven Grewel, a freelance genealogist working in Germany, is offering to do research, for a fee, for people who are searching for traces of their family in Germany. Visit his website at: [www.svengrewel.com](http://www.svengrewel.com)

## **Australian Actress Margot Robbie**

Betty and Colin Huf have made an interesting discovery: Australian actress Margot Robbie, who stars in the 2023 movie *Barbie*, has Wendish ancestors!

She is a descendant of the Mirtschin family from Döhlen. (See page 234 in *Mirtschin families in Australia 1851–1990*).

Her grandmother is a Mibus. She is also a Huf descendant (See page 632 in *Huf: 150 years in Australia 1847–1997*).





# Past Events



*Tour group at Bendigo Cemetery in front of the grave of J. C. T. Ballerstedt, Australia's first mining magnate, reputed to be Bendigo's richest person in the 1860s. Back: Gilbert Materne, Daniel and Colin Huf, Peter Winter, Ian Burdett. Front: Val Roll, Lyall Kupke, Clay Kruger, Margaret Gork, Lois Kupke, Ellen Bateson, Ene Noack, Julie Ballinger, Cheryl Green, Betty Huf, Rob Wuchatsch, Alex Frew, Catherine Gosling, John Noack, Jenny Gellatly.*

## Country Tour to Bendigo, Victoria 11–13 March 2023

*Our annual Tour was once again organized and conducted by our President Betty Huf, with the assistance of her husband Colin. We are very grateful for their meticulous planning of this event, which was attended by 26 people. Bendigo has numerous historical sites. Many developed due to the involvement of German immigrants, who arrived in the area from the 1850s onwards, lured by the promise of a prosperous life from success on the goldfields.*

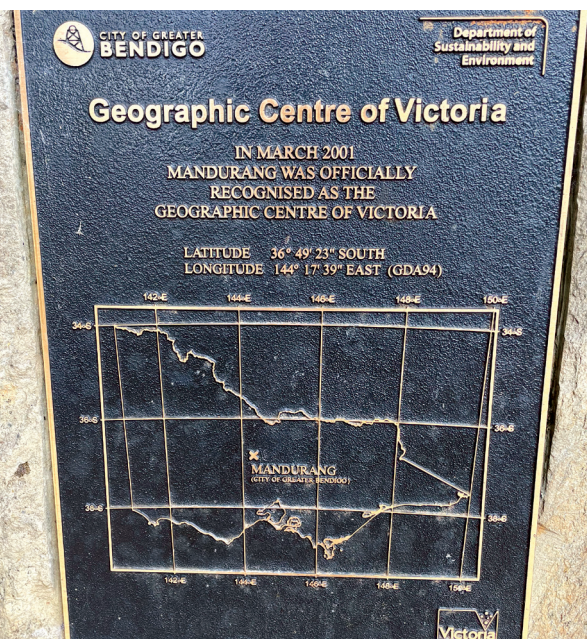
*The Tour included visits to the German sections of two cemeteries; the earliest Lutheran sites; the Catholic St Kilian's church established by Rev. Dr Backhaus; and the Victoria Hill mining precinct. Free time enabled individuals to choose personal places of interest. We thank John Noack for the following report.*

### Bendigo Cemetery

After gathering at the Rotary Gateway Park in Kangaroo Flat for Saturday lunch, we visited the Bendigo Cemetery on Carpenter Street. The gold miners included immigrants from various German States. The Cemetery Notes gave interesting details of over 20 of them, including their triumphs in life but also their tragedies.

Christopher Ballerstedt (1796–1869) was born in Magdeburg. He came to Australia in 1852 on his quest for gold. At Sandhurst, later Bendigo, he engaged firstly in alluvial mining. From 1853, he sank deep shafts, in order to reach the reefs of gold-bearing quartz. When he sank a shaft 300 feet deep on Victoria Hill, he struck a very rich reef of gold. By the 1860s, he was reputed to be the richest person in Bendigo. In 1871 his son Theodore sold the Ballerstedt estate to George Lansell.





*Tour participants at Mandurang, on the southern outskirts of Bendigo. Mandurang is recognised as the Geographic Centre of Victoria. Left to Right: Cheryl Green, Daniel and Colin Huf, Ene and John Noack, Noella Miller, Clay Kruger, Betty Huf, Jenny Gellatly.*

Johann ("John") Lohmann was from Schleswig-Holstein. He arrived in Bendigo in 1863. He was the Hotel-keeper of the Imperial Hotel until 1883, then he became an explosives manufacturer, operating the Champion Powder Works at Back Creek. Tragically, in 1885 some of the powder exploded and set the factory on fire. As a consequence, John was accidentally burned to death.

Charles William ("Jack") Pabst was born in 1859 at Bendigo and became a miner. He was a well-known local cricketer for 20 years. Sadly, he fell victim to the miner's complaint (silicosis), and died in 1902, aged only 42 years, leaving a widow and young family.

Friedrich Leypoldt was born in Stuttgart. He was ordained in 1869 and arrived in Bendigo late that year. He was installed as Pastor of the Lutheran 'Christ Church' at Bendigo in January 1870. He was an excellent scholar and was a member of the Deutscher Verein (German Association), the Science Society and the Bendigo Art Gallery. In addition to his pastoral duties, he taught German in several schools for many years. He was very saddened when Christ Church was burned to the ground in 1925. He retired in 1928, after a ministry of almost 60 years. He died in 1933, aged 89 years.

Wilhelm ("William") Vahland (1828-1915) from Hanover, arrived at Bendigo in 1854, and soon engaged in work as an Architect. In partnership with Robert Getzschmann, he helped to design many of Bendigo's finest and most impressive buildings. Vahland was also a Councillor from 1869 to 1872. When he retired in 1900, his son Henry took over the business.

World War I was a sad experience for Vahland. He was already an old man in 1915 (86 years of age) but he was required to surrender his passport to the authorities, even though he had been naturalized in 1857. For an esteemed citizen of Bendigo, this was an insult. Vahland insisted that he was not a German, as Germany (as a political entity) had not existed when he left. He claimed that he was a Hanoverian rather than a German, as his place of birth, Nienburg an der Weser, was in the Kingdom of Hanover. Vahland died in July 1915, aged 86. A "Notable Grave" Plaque has been placed at the foot of Vahland's rather understated grave, in recognition of the significance of his contribution to Bendigo.

### White Hills Cemetery

Our visit to this Cemetery provided more recent burials. Most of the deceased achieved reasonable ages. However, Frederick William Wust died from tuberculosis in 1906 when aged only 36 and three Schonfelder children died when they were very young: in 1884 August was 8 months; in 1890 Augusta was 17 months and in 1898 Henry was 12 months. Johann Bohling was a miner who died in 1898, aged 56. It appears that Johann, who had a wife and eight children, could not find "remunerative employment" in Bendigo, so in 1898 he was declared insolvent.

In contrast, Heinrich Munzel and his son Edward, who arrived in Sandhurst in 1853, were successful cabinet makers and joiners. They built furnishings and stairways in many of Bendigo's churches, schools and hotels.





### Bendigo's Lutheran Churches and Schools

The inspection of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Galvin Street revealed that it is no longer used for services but is now privately owned. The first German School and Lutheran Church, which are located at 110 Mackenzie Street in Bendigo, and which are believed to have been designed by W.C. Vahland, are also no longer functioning.

The German Common School on Old Violet Street in Ironbark also included a building designed by W.C. Vahland. This section has now been incorporated into the Violet Street School.

The Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 94 Spring Gully Road in Spring Gully was the venue for the worship service on Sunday 12 March at 9 am, which was conducted by Pastor Colin Simpkin. After the service, the Church Hall was the venue for Morning Tea and chatting with members of the congregation about the Wends and other topics.

### Bendigo's St Kilian's Church

Our visit to St Kilian's Catholic Church at 161 McCrae Street in Bendigo revealed that it was designed in 1887 by the Bendigo "Hanoverian" Architect W.C. Vahland. It was constructed of oregon and hardwood and is reputed to be one of the largest weatherboard churches in the world. It was opened in 1888 and was the Provisional Cathedral until 1901.

This church, which is still in use, is dedicated to St Kilian, an Irish Bishop who had undertaken mission work in Franconia but had been beheaded, after he gave some unwanted marriage advice to Gosbert, the Duke of Wurzburg. His remains and relics are now kept in the Wurzburg Cathedral.

This weatherboard building was actually the fifth church at this location. The first was a canvas tent, which the Priest Rev. Dr Henry Backhaus erected in 1851. A second tent, which also leaked, was followed by the erection of two stone churches in 1856 and 1857. However, both of these buildings experienced cracking and crumbling, so the present wooden Church was erected.

The name of "St Kilian" was adopted, because Kilian was the Patron Saint of Paderborn in Germany, which was the earlier home of the local Sandhurst Priest. This Priest was Rev. Dr Henry Backhaus (1811–1882). He was born in Paderborn, Westphalia. He was ordained in 1836 and he then engaged in mission work in Calcutta, India, along with 12 Loreto nuns. In 1846, he headed to Australia, where he worked in Sydney and then in Adelaide.

As gold fever hit the colony, Henry headed to the goldfields, where he launched the "Sandhurst Mission". He also helped to select land for churches and schools. This interest extended to financial matters and was



*Top: The former Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Calvin Street, Bendigo Centre: Tour group in front of the Altar in the current Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Spring Gully Road, Spring Gully. Bottom: Interior of St Kilian's Catholic Church, McCrae Street, Bendigo with Betty Huf explaining the church's history.*





illustrated by his large-scale investment in land. As a consequence, while retaining a frugal personal lifestyle, he became one of the wealthiest men in the colony. After his death the Backhaus Estate – a charitable trust – was established under his Will. This has provided an income stream – currently over \$750,000 annually – for the church for over a century. The Sacred Heart Cathedral, one of the biggest in Australia, was built entirely with funds from the Backhaus Estate. Henry died in Bendigo in 1882 and is buried in the grounds of St Kilian's Catholic Church.

### Bendigo's Sacred Heart Cathedral:

This Cathedral is located between High Street and Mackenzie Street. It is reputed to be one of Australia's largest churches and to have Australia's second-tallest spire. Inside, its height is over 24 metres and its length is over 75 metres. It is the mother church of the Dioceses of Sandhurst, which is the original name for Bendigo.

The construction of this Gothic-style Cathedral began in 1896. It was opened in 1901 and the spire was completed in 1977. The lectern was donated by George Lansell, Bendigo's "Quartz King" and there is extensive use of various types of marble. There are also about eight small chapels, dedicated to various religious persons, including St Francis Xavier, Our Lady, St Joseph, St Augustine and St Patrick; and the southern garden contains a bronze statue of Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Below the Mortuary Chapel is the crypt, where the previous Bishops of Sandhurst are buried.

### Tour Dinner:

Tour participants gathered at the Shamrock Hotel on Saturday evening for the Tour Dinner. This building was designed by W. C. Vahland but some extensions were designed and made by Phillip Kennedy, a student of Vahland. This impressive hotel is on the corner of Pall Mall and Williamson Street, Bendigo.

### PowerPoint Presentations

On Sunday 12 March, our evening meal was held in the hall of Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 94 Spring Gully Road in Spring Gully. Information was presented in relation to the Wends in Europe and in Australia and in relation to the involvement of Germans and Wends in the early history of Sandhurst or Bendigo.

### Victoria Hill Mining Site:

The energetic participants were happy to stop at 24-32 Happy Valley Road (off Marong Road) in Ironbark and to walk up to the top of Victoria Hill Mining Site. Then they could climb up to the top of the Tower; inspect the stone crusher and descend into a nearby mining pit. This valuable mining site was operated by Christopher Ballerstedt from 1853 and by George Lansell after 1871.



*One of the altars in the Chinese Joss House. The Joss House is constructed of hand-made bricks and painted red, the traditional Chinese colour denoting strength.*

### Golden Dragon Museum:

This Museum is located centrally on McCrae Street and its two main sections include its very colourful display of Dragons in the Museum, which opened in 1991, and its peaceful Yi Yuan Gardens, which opened in 1996. The Kwan Yin Temple, which was opened in November, 1996 follows the customs and traditions of the Bendigo Chinese citizens.

### Bendigo Art Gallery:

This gallery has organized some very large and important exhibitions in the past and its paintings on display are impressive.

### Talking Tram Tour

The Tram Tour departed from the Central Deborah Mine and travelled past the very impressive buildings and features, situated along the Pall Mall and McCrae Street. The trip ended at the Chinese Joss House.

### Other Activities and Venues

The provision of free time enabled participants to choose personal places of interest. Our Tour Guide provided a list of possible destinations. These included The Soldiers Memorial Military Museum; Dawson's Cactus Garden; Hustler's Reef Gold Miners Heritage Walk; The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion; Bendigo Pottery and the Lost Trades Fair.

### Expression of Gratitude:

The participants are very grateful to Betty and Colin Huf, and other helpers, who worked so hard to make this Country Tour to Bendigo so enjoyable and memorable.

JOHN NOACK  
PHOTOS: MICK AMPT





## Hochkirch Easter and Homeland Tour 29 March–24 April 2023

The Tour, led by Betty and Colin Huf, included 14 participants, 13 of whom were descendants of the Mirtschin, Burger, Rentsch and Deutscher families of the Hochkirch Parish. The time spent in the Bautzen and Hochkirch area over Easter was the Tour highlight. The Tour received coverage in the Sorbian media (newspaper, radio and TV).

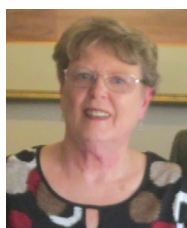
To watch the Sorbian TV segment, type the following into your search box in Google or Bing: *Awstralcenjo we Luzicy/Australier in der Lausitz*.

The President of the Domowina, Dawid Statnik, held in-depth discussions with the group. Wearing his Easter Rider outfit, he explained what is involved in this significant Sorbian Easter tradition.

## Annual General Meeting, Saturday 27 May, 2023

*The venue was the meeting room at St Aidan's, 12 Surrey St., Box Hill South, Vic. We are pleased to report that the meeting was very successful. We thank those who attended or appointed proxies and those who sent greetings and messages of support.*

We had 16 people in attendance, 6 apologies and 16 proxies. The following Office Bearers were re-elected: President Betty Huf, Vice President Mick Ampt, Secretary Glenys Wollermann, and Treasurer Robert Wuchatsch. Current Committee members had indicated that they were willing to continue in their positions. Jenny Gellatly, Margaret Gork, Colin Huf, Clay Kruger, Beryl Nagorcka, and Moira Nagorcka were all re-elected as Committee members.



In her President's Report, Betty Huf expressed her thanks for the support she has received from members throughout the past year. The Committee has held meetings on five occasions since our last AGM, and has worked consistently throughout the year on behalf of all members. Betty specifically acknowledged the work of the Secretary / Newsletter Editor Glenys Wollermann, the Treasurer Rob Wuchatsch and his Assistant Clay Kruger.

Betty gave a summary of activities undertaken since our last AGM: two retractable stand banners have been made; our Annual Luncheon was held at the Robin Hood Hotel, Ballarat on 22 October 2022; and our *Wendish News* continues to receive acknowledgement for the quality of its articles and production.

We welcomed 9 new members to our Society. Our Bendigo Tour on 11–13 March 2023, attended by 26 people, was appreciated by all.

We have two ongoing projects: the placing of a plaque on Kappler's grave in Mount Gambier and the compilation of a complete list of Wendish immigrants.

Betty gave a summary of the Hochkirch Easter and Homeland Tour on 29 March to 24 April 2023 (see above). It is now possible to translate Upper and Lower Sorbian using Bing Translate or Google Translate.

We were saddened to farewell two former Committee members: Joel Blackburn (23 December 2022) and Beverley Gotzky (5 February 2023). Their legacies will long be remembered – through Joel Blackburn's huge amount of computer work and indexing that he did for our website and research databases in our Library; and through Bev Gotzky's Wendish costume which has been donated to our collection.



Treasurer Rob Wuchatsch presented the Annual Financial Statement for 2022. He reported that we had a successful year. Membership numbers are also fairly stable.

The total credit monies held in accounts as at 31 December 2022 was \$30,013.63. This was an increase of \$5,124.45 since the previous year. It was decided that there will be no increase in membership fees for the coming year. Rob presented a proposed Budget for 2023, based on the 2022 Budget. The Budget was accepted.

## 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 names of donors from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023:

R. Albert, G. Allen, M. Arthurson, R. & J. Ballinger, D. Bell, R. Bransdon-Parkes, D. Brown, J. & J. Burger, S. Burke, C. Comas, M. Dalziel, B. Davies, D. Deutscher, W. & J. Edwards, G. Escreet, C. Freeman, A. Frew, C. Gosling, C. Green, H. Handreck, E. Hayden, S. Hayward, B. E. Healy, D. Herbig, J. & A. Hoffmann, C. & B. Huf, R. E. Huf, R. Jarick, J. Johnstone, J. & A. Keller, S. Kemfert, J. F. Kolloosche, M. & R. Kramer, A. Lueders, L. Maggs, M. Modra, R. & M. Moller, B. & M. Nagorcka, J. Pearce, J. Petschel, P. A. Richardson, M. K. Robson, G. Saegenschnitter, N. Salzke, B. Schier, J. Schilg, G. Uebergang, B. Van Elst, V. Wehner, J. Williams, C. Winsley.

*Please note: Membership invoices for 2024 are enclosed with this Newsletter.*





# Research

## *Best Sorbian wishes and greetings to Australia! – Dawid Statnik, President of the Domowina*

*We thank Betty Huf for the following article:*

On Friday 7 April 2023 (Good Friday) the 14 travellers in the Hochkirch Easter and Homeland Tour group enjoyed a Wendish lunch at the *Wjelbik* Sorbian restaurant in Bautzen. During our meal the President of the Domowina, Dawid Statnik, paid us a short visit, and to our enormous surprise, he appeared wearing a top hat, frock coat and riding boots – the costume of an Easter Rider.

Dawid has been the Domowina President since 2011 and is a moderator between Germans and Sorbs and a networker between Upper and Lower Lusatia. He often travels to Berlin to represent the Sorbs at a political level.

During our conversation, we discussed many things, including the role of the Domowina (Sorbian word for 'home'). Its aim is to represent the political and cultural interests of the approximately 60,000 Sorbs/Wends in the south of Brandenburg and in Upper Lusatia in Saxony at regional, state and federal level and abroad. Under the Membership section of the Domowina website our Wendish Heritage Society Australia is listed as an Associate member, as is the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia. If you click on our name, you are taken to our website.

The Domowina website [www.domowina.de/en/start](http://www.domowina.de/en/start) contains a wealth of information regarding the Organization and its activities. For those keen to learn the Sorbian language, it is now possible to learn both Upper and Lower Sorbian on this website: <https://sprachkurs.sorbischlernen.de/#/welcome> (learn Sorbian online). It is easy to follow and well-designed with plenty of enjoyable activities in structured and sequential lessons. For those interested in attending face-to-face language classes there are Summer School courses conducted in English.

One of the most interesting pieces of information that Dawid passed on was that both the Bing and Google Translate websites now have Upper and Lower Sorbian included in their list of languages.

In conclusion, Dawid asked about our two Australian Societies, the activities undertaken by each and the interactions between us. He mentioned that he sees our *Wendish News* editions as they are published and extended his greetings and best Sorbian wishes to our members.



*Top: Betty and Colin Huf with Dawid Statnik, who is wearing traditional Easter Rider costume.*

*Bottom: Dawid Statnik and son, Easter Riders.*

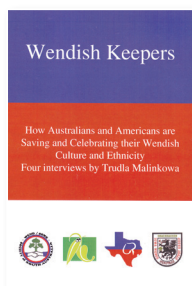
A most interesting chat about Dawid's role as an Easter Rider, and the traditions that are continued in this centuries-old custom of the Sorbs, ended his visit with us. This year's ride was a significant one for the Statnik family as Dawid's teenage son was riding with him for the first time.

BETTY HUF





# Books for Sale

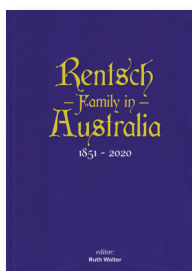


**Wendish Keepers: how Australians and Americans are saving and celebrating their Wendish culture and ethnicity – four interviews by Trudla Malinkowa**

Edited and produced by Weldon Mersiovsky

Copies are available for \$35.00, plus postage.

Contact Clay Kruger: Tel. (03) 8838 8737 or email [wensociety1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wensociety1@optusnet.com.au) or [krugerclay35@gmail.com](mailto:krugerclay35@gmail.com)



**Rentsch family in Australia 1851–2020**

Edited by Ruth Walter

Copies are available for \$70.00, plus postage.

Contact Ruth Walter: [ruth.walter43@gmail.com](mailto:ruth.walter43@gmail.com) Mob. 0435 211 606 or Monica Rentsch: [rentschdescendants2020@gmail.com](mailto:rentschdescendants2020@gmail.com) Mob. 0438 735 239.



**Mirtschin families in Australia 1851–1990**

Copies are available for \$10.00 plus postage.

Contact Glenys Wollermann: Tel. (03) 9891 6652 or email [g.wollermann@y7mail.com](mailto:g.wollermann@y7mail.com)

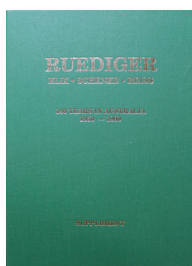


**Koenig 1848–1990: Christian & Karl Koenig and their descendants in Australia**

Related surnames: Lemm, Schmidt, Gladigau, Kroschel, Noske, Kroeker, Hundrack, Hartwich.

Copies are available for \$2.00 plus postage.

Contact Glenys Wollermann: Tel. (03) 9891 6652 or email [g.wollermann@y7mail.com](mailto:g.wollermann@y7mail.com)



**Ruediger: 140 years in Australia 1850-1990, Christian and Anna Elisabeth Ruediger: an update on the family tree from 1975 to 1990**

Related surnames: Elix, Schenke, Reiss.

Copies are available for \$2.00 plus postage.

Contact Glenys Wollermann: Tel. (03) 9891 6652 or email [g.wollermann@y7mail.com](mailto:g.wollermann@y7mail.com)





# Vale



## Beverley Gotzky (1942–2023)

Former Committee member Beverley Gotzky passed away on 5 February 2023, at 80 years of age. Her funeral was held on 22 February 2023 at Springvale Botanical Cemetery. A memorable and informative Eulogy reflecting on Beverley's life was presented by Ashley Schneider.

John Noack then spoke about Beverley's long and enthusiastic involvement with, and her valuable contributions to, the successful functioning of our Society. Our Society's banner was on display at the ceremony.

Trudla Malinkowa wrote a tribute to Beverley Gotzky which was published in the Sorbian newspaper *Serbske Nowiny*. Trudla thanked Betty Huf for providing some of the information for this article. We thank Trudla Malinkowa for the following English translation:

*Serbske Nowiny*, 24 February 2023

**"I had tears of joy in my eyes!"**

*Australian Sorb Beverley Gotzky (1942–2023)*

The sad news came from Australia that Beverley Gotzky passed away on Sunday 5 February at a nursing home in Melbourne at the age of 80. She was a descendant of the two Sorbian emigrants Andreas Albert from Rachlau at Czorneboh and Agneta Heinze from Brießnitz near Gröditz. As young adults, they left Lusatia together in 1848 and married in Australia. In Gnadenthal in the state of Victoria they established a farm and raised a family of ten children. Born Beverley Agnes Curtis on 11 November 1942, she was a descendant of Andreas Albert's eldest son, Johann.

From a young age, Bev, as they called her, was interested in her origins. She discovered her Sorbian roots and passed on this knowledge to other interested people. She didn't know the Sorbian language, but based on her origins, she felt that she was Sorbian.

She received strong support in her Sorbian research from her husband, Benno Gotzky, a German born in Berlin in 1931 who emigrated to Australia in 1952. The marriage remained without children. They lived in East Malvern, a suburb of Melbourne, the capital of the state of Victoria. Bev worked as a teacher and helped Benno establish a furniture manufacturing business.

### Great interest in Lusatia

Together, the couple devoted themselves intensively to the history of Sorbian and German emigration. In 1985 they visited Lusatia for the first time, where they researched the parish archive in Hochkirch and found the former Albert farm in Rachlau. They became friends with their relatives living there, the Günter Lehmann family. In the 1990s they often stayed in Lusatia and made many contacts here, including with the Domowina, the Sorbian Museum and Sorbian filmmakers. They also supported the author of these lines, who was researching the history of Sorbian emigration at the time, with material from Australia. They were happy to come to Bautzen for cultural highlights such as the premiere of the book, the film screening or the opening of the exhibition on the emigration of the Sorbs.

Together with other descendants of the Sorbs from Australia and Texas, they took part in the 1994 festival of Sorbian culture in Raddusch in Lower Lusatia. Beverley was so moved by this experience that she reported in the Sorbian journal *Rozhlad*:

*For me, the highlight of the festival was the presentation of traditional ceremonies from the evangelical area around Bautzen, where my ancestors came from. Words fail me to express my strong feelings when I saw my old family's costumes worn at weddings, christenings and other celebrations. Up until this cultural peak, I knew very little about the types of clothing for everyday wear or for various special celebrations. And when I saw my great-grandparents' christening and wedding dress, I had tears of joy in my eyes!*

### Connections with descendants of the emigrants

In Australia, the Gotzky couple maintained many contacts with relatives from the Albert family and other descendants of Sorbian emigrants. In 1983 they helped to organize the Albert Family Reunion, a big reunion of the descendants of the Albert family. In 1989 Beverley became a Committee member of the Wendish Heritage Society Australia. As part of the Society, the couple helped to organize events and





festivals at which Sorbian and German culture was celebrated. At such occasions Beverley proudly wore the costume of the Protestant Sorbs of the Bautzen area, which was sewn especially for her in Bautzen with advice from the Domowina. The spouses were happy to support the Australians who set off on a trip to Lusatia. Conversely, they also accommodated visitors from Lusatia and guided them through the Sorbian areas in the state of Victoria. Alfons Frencl, on his research trip in 1990, was one such visitor.

The Gotzky couple also maintained many connections with the descendants of the Sorbs in Texas. In 1992 they took part in a Sorbian festival in Serbin. Until the early 2000s, they often travelled to the Sorbian regions there. They also met friends from Texas on various occasions in Lusatia.

After the death of her husband in 2007, Beverley withdrew more and more from the public eye. For the past few years she was in Residential Aged Care not far from the place where she used to live. I was allowed to meet her there during my visit to Australia in 2018. It was our last meeting. She left her collection of books and photos of Lusatia, as well as her beautiful Sorbian costume, to the Wendish Heritage Society Australia.

With their many years of work, Beverley and Benno Gotzky contributed a great deal to the promotion of Sorbian heritage and family history in Australia. Thanks are also due to them from Lusatia.

TRUDLA MALINKOWA

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### Kerri Huppatz (1949–2023)

Kerri Huppatz (nee Scholz) passed away on 29 April 2023, at 73 years of age. A memorial service was held at Lilydale Memorial Park Chapel, Victoria on Tuesday 9 May 2023. Our condolences to her husband Ian Huppatz, her family and friends.

### Clarice Deutscher (1920–2023)

Our condolences to Daryl Deutscher on the loss of his mother, Clarice Deutscher (nee Niewand), who died on 2 August 2023, at the age of 102. Her funeral was held at St John's Lutheran Church Minyip, followed by committal at the Rupanyup Cemetery, Victoria.

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## General News

### 100th Birthday Greetings to Doreen Bozen (nee Wenke)

Congratulations to our Society's centenarian, Doreen Bozen, who reached this special milestone on 12 April 2023. Doreen Bozen and her sister Iris Sullivan were regular volunteers at our Wendish Research Centre at Doncaster during the 1990s.

### 91st Birthday Greetings to Clay Kruger

Congratulations to our Society's stalwart, Clay Kruger, who celebrated his 91st birthday on 23 July 2023.



We are very grateful to Clay for his continued loyal service as Assistant Treasurer. Clay manages the online banking, keeps membership records up to date, prints invoices and mails out our Newsletters, in addition to other tasks. He continues to be an inspiration to us all!

### 90th Birthday Greetings to Gladys Koch (nee Burger)

Congratulations to our past President, Gladys Koch, on celebrating her 90th birthday on 8 May 2023. Gladys celebrated her special day with a family reunion of almost all members of her four generations of descendants.



### 80th Birthday Greetings to Moira Nagorcka



Congratulations to Committee member Moira Nagorcka on reaching this special milestone. Moira celebrated her 80th birthday on 29 August 2023. We wish Moira many more years of good health and happiness.





*A panoramic view of Bendigo was seen from Pethard Place Lookout, where Tour participants bade each other farewell. Left to Right: Rob Wuchatsch, Sue Gravenall, Clay Kruger, Ellen Bateson, Julie Ballinger, June Winter, John and Ene Noack, Betty Huf, Alex Frew, Cheryl Green, Colin Huf, Lois and Lyall Kupke, Catherine Gosling, Peter Winter, Gilbert Materne*

## 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

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