



wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

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Clockwise from top:

1. Augusta Lange with the bedspread she crafted using drawn-thread embroidery (see p.8). 2. & 3. Examples of embroidery in the Lange Collection (see p.8).

PHOTOS: BETTY HUF.

4. Walla Walla Zion Lutheran Church (see p.6).

PHOTO: ROB LACEY

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Calendar of upcoming events

Easter Tour in Lusatia, 6 April–5 May 2025

Following the success of their Hochkirch Easter and Homelands Tour of 2023, Betty and Colin Huf will lead another Tour to experience Easter in Lusatia.

There will be 14 participants who will visit the ancestral villages of Wendish forebears while in Lusatia, as well as the villages of German ancestors in other parts of Germany and Poland.

Annual General Meeting, Saturday 31 May 2025

Our Society's AGM will be held at 2.00pm, followed by afternoon tea. All are welcome. The venue is the meeting room at St Aidan's, 12 Surrey St, Box Hill South, Victoria.

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. Any member who is attending the meeting may be appointed as a proxy. Committee members may also 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 30 May.

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 31 May 2025. I appoint as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the meeting."

Contact: Glenys Wollermann (Secretary)

Tel: (03) 9891 6652 or 0481 150 994

Email: g.wollermann@y7mail.com

Past Events

Annual Luncheon in Ballarat, Saturday 5 October 2024

Prior to our Luncheon, about 28 people met from 10.00am at Deutscher Outdoor Power Equipment, 731 Creswick Rd, Ballarat. After morning tea, Peter Deutscher, assisted by Rob Deutscher, led us on a tour of the engineering works.

Peter informed us of the production of engines, farming equipment, mowers, shredders and a range of health care products, including medical beds and accessories. He demonstrated a new 100% Australian made invention: a baby change table which can be raised and lowered by remote control, eliminating the need to lift the child manually.

Our Luncheon began at 12.30 pm at Maple Palace at Barkly Motorlodge, 43 Main Road, Bakery Hill, Ballarat. 33 people attended, including a number of Deutscher family members who were "first timers". There were 19 apologies. A range of Chinese dishes was served buffet style, followed by fresh fruit, tea and coffee. A PowerPoint presentation, prepared by Peter and Rob Deutscher, told of the development of the Deutscher family's engineering works in Ballarat.



Another highlight was the display of Mary Ann Callinan's treasured family heirloom, a 200 year old sewing box. It was made in Hochkirch in Saxony by Michael Schmidt and presented to his sister Agnes in January 1825. (See page 10 of the September 2024 *Wendish News*.)

Betty Huf related an interesting anecdote from Bruce Burger whose car broke down near Ballarat in the 1980s. Bruce remembers with gratitude the generous assistance and hospitality of Mr Eric Deutscher.

Various family history books were for sale. Betty Huf presented two books (pictured above) we have recently acquired for our Library: *Wendish Folklore: its Legends, Traditions and Customs* by Wilibald von Schulenburg and *Festivals and Folk Customs of the Sorbs (Wends)* produced and edited by Weldon Mersiovsky.



Above: Peter Deutscher describes an early engine manufactured by the Deutscher engineering works.

We thank Peter and Rob Deutscher, Betty Huf and all their helpers for an enjoyable and informative Luncheon. Margaret Gork deserves a special mention for her work behind the scenes in liaising with the restaurant. Last but not least we thank all those who attended and made this event a resounding success.

We thank John Noack for the following Report.

Deutscher Mowers: A Ballarat Manufacturing Success Story

It is rare for a business to last more than one generation, let alone survive over one hundred years.

The year 2023 marked the 100th anniversary of the H.F. Deutscher manufacturing business in Ballarat. Harry Deutscher (H.F.) moved the business from Hamilton to be closer to allied partners and as part of a fresh start, setting up 'shop' in Davey Street, Ballarat.

Hamilton and the "Gem" Engine

The Deutscher engineering story began earlier in Hamilton around 1904 when C.T. Deutscher took a financial interest in the Clyde Engineering works. The business had a variety of names and business partners which ebbed and flowed with the success or otherwise of new inventions and the times. Most famous of these inventions was the "Gem" Engine which was designed

as a mobile power source to drive a saw bench or chaff cutter machine for farmers.

High Quality Products

Today, Deutscher Mowers remains a family owned business now incorporating Deutscher Health Care. It is a business that has survived two world wars, the decline of the manufacturing industry in Australia, overseas competition and the removal of tariffs for locally manufactured products. Whilst Deutscher's has never been a large business, it has retained a strong reputation for manufacturing products that are of high quality, long lasting and a product that customers are proud to own.

Ballarat as a Manufacturing Centre

Historically, Ballarat has been something of a manufacturing centre with other well-known businesses like Ronaldson Bros. & Tippet, Jelbart Bros., Munro Engineers, Holloway's and the Sunshine Harvester works. There was a strong inter-relationship with Munro's from the Hamilton days with Deutscher engines being used to power Munro farm equipment. It is believed that Munro was instrumental in the move to Ballarat.



Past Events ...continued

H. F. Deutscher and the “Triumph” Engine

In the early days in Ballarat the factory designed and manufactured a new engine called the “Triumph” as well as using the foundry and factory equipment to service regional farming needs and other manufacturers. H.F. Deutscher’s ingenuity oversaw the design and development of a tractor, universal loggers, oil engines, log sawing machines, bag loaders and post boring machines, all noted for their originality, durability and performance.

Harry Deutscher’s Travelling Workshop

The Depression of the 1930s made it tough going with a lack of finance, and the inability of customers to pay for products or repairs. H.F. Deutscher also had its struggles with Harry Deutscher setting up a ‘kitted out’ truck as a travelling workshop from which he offered repair services for plant and machinery on properties in the Western District of Victoria.

Popular Post Hole Borer

After World War II, H.F. Deutscher came up with an innovative design for a post hole borer to bore holes in fence posts as a response to the fencing needs of the soldier settlers on farms. It was revolutionary as it was the first such implement to have a reverse gear. It could be driven by a small stationary engine via a flexible shaft or the power take off on a tractor. It is estimated that 5000 borers were manufactured up until the 1990’s.

Death of Harry in 1950 and Management by his Son Eric Deutscher

In June of 1950, Harry Deutscher died suddenly in a vehicle accident. He was returning home late from a day fixing equipment on a farm and collided with a stationary vehicle on the outskirts of Ballarat. H.F. Deutscher’s only son Eric took over the running of the business only six weeks after being married. The business was financially stressed, so at this time the focus was on manufacturing post hole borers, saw benches, power hacksaws, carrying out repairs to engines and undertaking light engineering work.

The World-Famous Deutscher Mowers

The birth of the Deutscher Mower came from a conversation with a relative who suggested to Eric that farmers could make good use of a machine that could slash grass around sheds and houses for maintenance and fire breaks on their properties. Early models could be described as ‘rugged’ but did the job.

Over fifteen different models have been manufactured and improved over the years, including self-propelled and ride-on mowers.

These mowers have been widely distributed all around Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.



Over 11,550 Ride-On Units Between 1966–1993

Deutscher mowers have the reputation as the ‘Land Rover’ of mowers, reliable, well-built and well suited to Australian conditions. Over 11,550 of the ride-on units were produced between May 1966 and September 1993. At the height of production, Deutscher made twenty-five ride-on mowers per week with a similar number of self-propelled units.

Local Cooperation

The design was a team effort with practical and pragmatic input from the factory foreman Bob MacDonald. Eric’s cousin Lou Deutscher was a trusted partner, friend, and advisor who designed the gear boxes for the mowers, including producing the castings and cutting the gears. In testament to the ingenuity of the gearboxes, very little was changed over the life of the mowers because they functioned so well. A large percentage of the mower components were manufactured in Ballarat, except for the engine. Early models did however use a Villiers engine manufactured locally by Ronaldson Bros. & Tippet. Sheet metal works were carried out by Holloway’s and many other local businesses supported with various parts and processes. Eric Deutscher had a strong belief in supporting and partnering with local



Opposite top: A Deutscher ride-on mower. Opposite below: Peter and Rob Deutscher at the Deutscher engineering works. Above left: An adjustable medical bed produced by Deutscher Healthcare. Above right: Peter Deutscher demonstrates the “Genesis Safety” change table for toddlers.

businesses and built long-term relationships with local suppliers which contributed to the success of the business and the local economy.

The Move to Creswick Road in 1979

As part of their success, Deutscher's were early adopters of MIG welders, peg board automatic Ward lathes and laser cutting, which all resulted in increased productivity and maintaining a 'fair price' for products. The move to the former Coronet Caravan factory on Creswick Road in 1979 provided the opportunity for expansion and a more efficient factory layout including for logistics. The Creswick Road premises also accommodated the Power and Equipment sales and services branch formerly acquired from Harold Devison who had premises at 1 Creswick Road.

A New Direction for Manufacturing

With competition from overseas products, Council amalgamations and the decline in manufacturing in Australia in general, there was significant pressure on local manufacturing businesses. Models were rationalised, manufacturing of components upgraded and simplified, and distribution bought back in house.

Deutscher's Health Care Products After 2000

Peter Deutscher took over the business in 1999 with the retirement of his father Eric. In 2000 the company began its diversification into Health Care products. This initial move was in manufacturing bedframes for other suppliers which then led to Deutscher's own designs, under the guidance of John Walmsley. Walmsley's experience was crucial to the shift of focus and today Deutscher Health Care manufactures six ranges of beds all tested by the National Association of Testing Authorities and approved to Australian Standards.

Fully Adjustable Beds and Baby Change Tables

By 2008 the health care products had grown to 50% of the business and future prospects were strong. During the Covid pandemic, the Victorian Department of Health reached out to Deutscher's to provide beds to support their response to the pandemic. There are models which meet the requirements of the NDIS scheme, beds that are suitable for domestic use as well as beds which height adjust down to the floor. One of the special bed models has recently been installed in the Mental Health Unit at the Royal Melbourne Hospital.

A Very Good Place to Work

Many employees had career long jobs at Deutscher's and in turn, made valuable contributions to the business and its products and remained friends of the family. Eric Deutscher was once described as the chaplain to travelling salesmen, always offering a listening ear.

The Current Management

The company is now run under management with the capable leadership of Laurie Treadwell who has brought fresh and commercial ideas to lead the future growth of the business.

A Wendish Family Business with Many Satisfied Customers

An early business motto was “every customer a satisfied customer and a friend”. Deutscher's is a real manufacturing success story inextricably linked to Ballarat. To achieve a 100 year history with an enviable reputation has taken grit, adaptability, quality products, loyalty, a degree of luck and many friends.

REPORT AND PHOTOS: JOHN NOACK



Centenary of the Walla Walla Zion Lutheran Church Building, 26–27 October 2024

We thank Tony Brinkmann for the following report.

The Centenary celebrations went off without a hitch. The lead-up to the weekend and early starts on the two days caused the usual nervous tension, but both days turned out to be a great success. The weather played its part too by staying fine and warm.

The weekend opened with a tour of the pioneer section of the Walla Walla Cemetery. Karen Wenke led the talk, and Tanja Schramm-Trethowan was on hand to interpret the German script on the old, weather-worn headstones. About 30 to 35 people attended and enjoyed the informative talk.

Organ Recital and Historical Display

An organ recital by Graham Lieschke followed in the afternoon. Graham had been overseas for some time; he came up to Walla Walla from Melbourne on the previous two weekends to practise on the organ. Selections played included *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*, *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring*, and *Sheep May Safely Graze*, all J.S. Bach favourites for the pipe organ. Following a standing ovation, Graham went on to play one more piece to make sure there were no bugs left in the organ!

Above: Interior of Walla Walla Zion Lutheran Church, ready for the Thanksgiving Service. Opposite top: Organ and choir at the Thanksgiving Service. Opposite below: Horses and wagon beside the Church.

This was a most satisfying and well-received recital by Graham, which was attended by about 200 people.

The historical display, which was open on Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon, started as a bit of an unknown venture; we had no idea what was going to arrive. In the end, we had plenty of historical information, documents, certificates, and photos – a hall full of interesting memorabilia.

Thanksgiving Church Service

The Sunday morning church service went off without a hitch, much to Pastor John Borchert's relief. Prior to the service, Garry Mickan recited a poem he had written himself, giving thanks to God for the role the church building, pastors, and congregation members had played for over one hundred years. Garry's grandfather and great-grandfather both had roles in the opening of our Zion churches in 1889 and in 1924.

Pastor John led the church service, with help from two former Zion pastors, Pastor Darren Kupke and NSW Bishop Emeritus, Pastor Robert Bartholomaeus. Another former pastor, Bishop of Victoria and Tasmania, Lester Priebbenow, was also in attendance.



NSW Bishop Richard Schwedes delivered the sermon, which included some interesting congregational participation. A choir was formed for the occasion, consisting of members from both Zion Walla Walla and St Paul's Henty. Two hymns were sung under the guidance of conductor Andrew Zweck. The one verse and two choruses we had to sing in German were a challenge, but I think we did well! The choir then led the congregation's singing for the rest of the service, which sounded impressive according to some in the congregation. Our regular organist, Craig Wenke, did

a great job on the organ. Around 300 attended the service, from which the freewill offering was distributed to Australian Lutheran World Service (66%) and to Lutheran Archives in Adelaide (33%).

Refreshments and Entertainment

The Ladies Guild, although small in number, kept the tea and coffee going over the weekend. A scrumptious afternoon tea, highlighted by various versions of streusel kuchen, or German cake, was served on Saturday, and a shared lunch on Sunday was served with minimal fuss, with plenty to go around for the 300 or so who attended.

Julie Barber took on the role of getting the Walla Walla wagon out of the shed for the day on Sunday. With the help of Andrew Marriott from Benalla, who supplied the second horse to harness up with Julie's "Spot On", and a few helpers, the horses and wagon posed for family photos beside the church. Wagon rides were offered up and down the main street for a few lucky patrons.

Along with the theme of old things, Cecil and Kim Lieschke, along with Andrew Kotzur, brought along their old vehicles for display at various times throughout the weekend. Bryson Terlich also displayed his finely restored Furphy water cart — a connection to the church building's dedication one hundred years ago, not lost on those who read the history on display. At the dedication services, seven Furphy tanks were on hand to provide hot and cold water for the 2,000 to 2,500 people who attended the dedication.

TONY BRINKMANN, ON BEHALF OF THE
2024 CENTENARY ORGANISING COMMITTEE.
PHOTOS: TONY BRINKMANN

There was no March Tour this year. Instead we participated in the program of events at Westgarthtown.

175th Anniversary Celebrations of the Arrival of the *Pribislaw* and Establishment of Westgarthtown

Descendants' Day, Sunday 2 March 2025

Descendants' Day was held at Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and Heritage Garden (100 Gardenia Rd, Thomastown, Victoria) on Sunday 2 March from 11.00 am onwards.

The special program included the launch of the 1:40 model of the *Pribislaw* by Dirk Weissleder from Germany. Another highlight was a special 175th Thanksgiving Service in the Thomastown Lutheran Church.

A full report and photos of this event will be published in our next edition of *Wendish News*.



Research

The Amazing Needlework Skill of Augusta Lange (née Klowss)

We thank Betty Huf for the following article.

Gottlieb Klowss, Augusta's father, was born in the Wendish village of Drewitz, Lower Lusatia, in 1845. He emigrated to Australia as a twelve-year-old with his parents in 1858, arriving in Adelaide, South Australia.

The following year, his family moved to the Mount Gambier area to select newly available land. In 1872, Gottlieb travelled to Victoria, where he selected 320 acres on the banks of Lake Natimuk, becoming one of the first settlers near the lake and the first Wend to arrive in the Natimuk district.

When Gottlieb married Augusta Gladigau in 1874, it was the first wedding conducted in the newly erected Lutheran Church in Natimuk. They built a pug home on their property, which they named *Bougainvillea*. The couple had twelve children:

- Wilhelm Heinrich (m. Eliza A. Mayberry)
- Johann Carl (died from typhoid at age one)
- Helena (m. John Boehm)
- Augusta Marie (m. Hermann C. J. Lange)
- Bertha Wilhelmine (m. Ernest Westendorf)
- Heinrich (m. Nellie Stewart)
- Ida Dorothea (m. Alfred W. Lockwood)
- Wilhelmine Johanna (m. Horace Snowden)
- Johann George (m. Mathilda S. Haustorfer)
- Sophie
- Carl Albert (m. Ida Marie Haustorfer)
- Elsie Georgina (m. 1. Albert Haase, 2. Frederick C. Uebergang)

Gottlieb, with the help of his sons, expanded his holdings to 1,000 acres, 400 of which were cultivated annually. Embracing new farming techniques, he was the first in the Natimuk district to purchase and operate a harvester. A lover of horses, he frequently won prizes at local agricultural shows.

Around 1900, the family built a spacious brick homestead featuring a lacework iron verandah, a cellar, smokehouse, orchard, and a garden with a magnificent view of the lake. Augusta taught her daughters cooking, baking, gardening, and home crafts, ensuring the family's self-sufficiency. They attended the Lutheran church in Natimuk, participating in various auxiliaries. Gottlieb was a committee member of the Natimuk Agricultural and Pastoral Society, and his family contributed many entries to district show competitions.

Gottlieb passed away suddenly in 1903 at age 58, and Augusta died in 1928 at age 72. Eleven of their children reached adulthood, with ten marrying and raising families of their own.



Augusta Marie Klowss: A Gifted Needleworker

Augusta Marie Klowss, the fourth child of the Klowss family, was an exceptionally skilled needleworker and embroiderer. At age 17, she began entering the adult sections of local agricultural shows. In 1897, *The Horsham Times* reported that amongst the entries *were beautiful specimens of art needlework, conspicuous amongst them were a very fine drawn-thread muslin dress, handkerchief, and tray cloth by Miss Klowss of Natimuk*. She won numerous prizes for her embroidery at the annual shows in Natimuk, Horsham, Goroke, and Dimboola. She also excelled in baking, preserving, and home-made goods, submitting winning entries of cakes, jams, pastries, shortbreads, and sausages.



Opposite top: Corner detail of a drawn-thread embroidered tablecloth in the Lange Collection. Opposite below: Augusta Lange's lace-making machine. Above left: Embroidery on three supper cloths in the Lange Collection. Above right: Detail of a section of the bedspread showing Augusta Lange's intricate stitching.

In 1905, at age 25, Augusta married Hermann Christoph Johann Lange. They raised five children:

- Dorothy
- Louis Hermann
- Laura Ida (m. Norm L. Schmidt)
- Elsie Victoria
- Thelma Mary (m. Roy E. Uebergang)

Augusta continued competing in needlework contests until 1908, later focusing on floral competitions. She remained active as a judge for various district show categories and encouraged her children to participate, fostering a family tradition of prize-winning entries.

A Legacy in Needlework

Augusta was widowed in 1938 when her husband went missing from a ship while returning from a two-month stay at a health resort in Rotorua, New Zealand. She remained active in the Lutheran church in Natimuk and charitable organizations until her passing in 1949 at age 68.

In 1997, Marie Rees and Anna Puls published *Heritage Hidden Treasures 1838-1938*, a tribute to the experiences of Lutheran women in early Australian settlement. The back cover of this book features a photograph of Augusta Lange and an extraordinary example of her needlework—a bedspread crafted using drawn-thread embroidery, an intricate technique dating back to 12th-century Europe.

This form of embroidery involves removing threads from the warp and weft of even-weave fabric, then grouping the remaining threads with decorative stitches and knots to create elaborate patterns. Augusta used fabric from *Old Bleach*, an Irish company renowned for sun-bleached linens. She spent six years completing the queen-sized bedspread, working on it daily except Sundays. Augusta taught her needlework skills to her

daughters, and Saturday afternoons were dedicated to embroidery, sewing, and crafts with them. Many of their handcrafted doilies, tablecloths, and other household items still exist today.

Augusta also purchased a lace-making machine, producing intricate lace pieces with her daughters. It is likely that the lace collar she wears in the book's photograph is one she made herself.

The bedspread remains well-preserved, wrapped in linen and stored in a moth-proof box. This remarkable piece of craftsmanship is now in the possession of one of Augusta's descendants in Natimuk.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS: BETTY HUF

Recollections of a visit to view my Great-Great-Aunt Gussie's Bedspread

We thank Marlene Greiner for the following article.

My grandmother, Vera Milbourne (née Boehm), was born in 1909 and her family lived on a farm next to where the Natimuk Creek enters Lake Natimuk. She was a natural story teller and I grew up listening to her stories of memories about her childhood in Natimuk.

One afternoon when I visited, I found Granny reading *Heritage Hidden Treasures 1838-1938*. She read out a few of the old 'cures' in the book and then showed me the back cover. It was a photo of a lady working on a huge and beautiful pulled thread-work cloth. Granny told me that the lady was her "Aunt Gussie".

Augusta Lange (née Klowss) was my great-grandmother's sister. They were two of the seven daughters of Gottlieb Klowss and his wife Augusta (née Gladigau). The Klowss family also lived at the Natimuk Lake. Granny's mother Helena married Johann Boehm from



across the creek, while Augusta married Hermann Lange from near Mt Arapiles.

In Easter 1972 there was a “Back to Natimuk”. Granny hired a caravan out at the Natimuk Lake caravan park and she, my mother, father and their four children squished into it for the duration. One morning they went to Mt Arapiles for a walk. On the way

Augusta Lange’s bedspread with her photo (see front cover)



back, Granny suggested they drop in at the Lange farm and see Auntie Gussie’s bedspread. (Gussie’s children Lou and Elsie ran the farm then). The bedspread was renowned throughout the extended Klowss family and a ‘must see’.

So, Granny and our family stopped at Lange’s house, piled out of the car and up to the door. Mum has never forgotten the look of horror on Elsie’s face when she saw the crowd at her door! She quickly reassured her, “It’s all right Elsie, we’re not staying for lunch, we’ve only come to see Auntie Gussie’s bedspread.”

Dad and my brother went with Lou to see his special old car and the rest went inside. There they saw a spread on the kitchen table of ham, roast turkey and all the trimmings for the lunch Elsie was putting on for the Pastor. The bedspread was viewed and admired and after thanking Elsie profusely, Granny, Mum and the girls were out of the house in no time, and everyone got into the car.

As they were about to drive away Elsie came out of the house and down the path. “Marie, here’s something for the children,” she said and pressed a small grease-proof paper parcel into Mum’s hand. After thanking Elsie, they drove away and the package was opened. There, glistening in the grease-proof paper were the two very ends off the turkey wings. The ‘turkey tips’ if you will. They roared laughing and the story of the visit to see Auntie Gussie’s bedspread and Elsie’s turkey tips went down in our family folklore. As the baby of the family, and not born at the time of the momentous visit, it was great for me to see Auntie Gussie’s bedspread on the cover of *Heritage Hidden Treasures*.

MARLENE GREINER

Vale

Reginald Butler OAM (1941–2024)

Reg Butler passed away on 29 December 2024. A celebration of his life was held on 7 January 2025 at St Paul’s Lutheran Church, Hahndorf, South Australia, followed by committal in the Hahndorf Cemetery.

Reg Butler’s knowledge of local history, particularly relating to the original Lutheran immigration to Hahndorf, was exceptional. He had written over 20 historical publications and dedicated countless hours to community service, genealogy and local history groups. In 2015 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services to the community as an historian.

For many years Reg Butler’s comprehensive library was housed in a building he had purpose-built adjacent to his residence in Hahndorf. When Reg was admit-

ted to a Nursing Home, the Paech family, via the Beerenberg Foundation, accepted custody of the Reg Butler Research Collection on behalf of the people of Hahndorf. The Paech family provided a restored residence on their property, Beerenberg Family Farm, to house his entire very extensive collection. They also provide management of the Hahndorf Archives and its volunteers.

Eric Collyer (1936–2025)

Eric Collyer passed away on 2 January 2025, at the age of 88. His funeral service was held on 24 January 2025 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Pasadena, South Australia, followed by a committal at Centennial Park Cemetery.



A descendant of Johann Gottlieb Thiele, one of the pioneers of Doncaster, Victoria, Eric co-authored *The Thiele Family of Doncaster 1849–1989* and wrote several books on local history. He was a founding member of the Doncaster Templestowe Historical Society, established in 1967, and played a major role in its development, serving as President for seven years. Always generous with his extensive knowledge of family and local history, he was dedicated to assisting others. His commitment to preserving the history of Doncaster and Templestowe has left a lasting legacy.

David Herbig (1933–2024)

David Herbig passed away on 8 November 2024, aged 91 years. His funeral service was held on 23 November 2024 at the Springton Lutheran Church, South Australia, followed by committal in the Springton Cemetery.

A tribute published in *The Advertiser* describes David Herbig as *the author, historian and passionate preserver of heritage whose tireless work on the “Herbig Family Tree” history in Springton SA has left a profound legacy and inspired us all. He will be sadly missed.*

Dennis Jenke (1930–2024)

We thank Trudla Malinkowa for the following tribute, which was published in the Wendish newspaper Serbske Nowiny on 11 December 2024. This edited article has been translated into English with the help of Google Translate.

News has been received from Australia that Mr **Dennis Jenke** died on November 3, 2024 in Lobethal, near Adelaide, at the age of 94. He was a committed member and former President of the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia. He left behind his wife June, son Mark, two grandchildren and a great-grandchild. As a loyal member of the Lutheran Church, he found his final resting place in the parish cemetery in Lobethal.

Dennis Jenke was born on August 12, 1930 into a family of Upper Lusatian origin. He was a descendant of the emigrants Johann Jenke from Rackel and Maria née **Kleinig** from Cortnitz, who in 1854 set off for Australia as a young married couple with their daughter, some relatives and other acquaintances. Most of the 47 Wends in this group were from the Gröditz parish. The journey on the ship *Steinwärder* from Hamburg to Adelaide took almost four months, from July to November 1854. The Jenke couple had a son on the ship. Three women and four children died en route.

The majority of the Wendish group found a new home in the Barossa Valley north of Adelaide. The Jenke family settled in St. Kitts together with other Wends, where they bought some land in 1858 and set

up a farm. Together, the villagers formed a Lutheran parish and built a church and school. The Jenke family's connection to faith remained firmly anchored, and in later years a pastor emerged from the family. The farm in St. Kitts remained in the family's possession for a total of 97 years, until 1955. Descendants of the family still own vineyards in the area.

Dennis Jenke placed great importance on his Wendish origins throughout his life. He discovered these particularly through his family history research, which he presented in a book published in 1974. On the occasion of the 120th anniversary of their emigration, a Jenke family reunion was held in St. Kitts.

When a Wendish society was founded in Adelaide in 1986, Dennis and June Jenke soon became active members. They served on the society's committee for many years. They went on tours to Lusatia on a number of occasions. They also organized various trips to areas in South Australia where the Wends settled. Dennis Jenke served as treasurer of the society from 1996. After retiring from his job, he became President in 1998. At that time, the society took on its current name, Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia. During his Presidency, the society became an associated member of the Domowina, the Wendish umbrella organization in Lusatia, in 2005. One year later, the 76-year-old handed over the office of President to younger hands.

In retirement, Dennis Jenke not only worked for the Wend/Sorb Society, but also for twenty years, together with his wife, as a volunteer in the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide. The current President of the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia, the retired teacher and archivist **Lyall Kupke**, who is also a volunteer in the Lutheran Archives, has a high regard for his predecessor. In his words of thanks, he emphasized that Dennis Jenke was a very committed retiree who devoted a lot of time and energy to both the Wendish society and the Lutheran Archives.

The deceased should also be remembered with gratitude and honor in Lusatia. Dennis Jenke has preserved and continued the religious-national tradition of his Wendish ancestors. Imparting knowledge about the Wends and maintaining relations between Australia and Lusatia were matters close to his heart.

TRUDLA MALINKOWA

Rev. Samuel Simpfendorfer (1934–2024)

Rev. Samuel Simpfendorfer died on 2 December 2024, aged 90 years. His funeral service was held on 12 December 2024 at Lifeway Lutheran Church, Epping NSW. We extend our condolences to his wife Alicia, his five children and their families.



Historical display in the old church (now church hall) for the centenary of Walla Wall Zion Lutheran Church.

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

Newsletter Editor: Glenys Wollermann

Librarian: Janice Blackburn

Office Bearers:

President: Betty Huf, PO Box 26, Tarrington, Vic 3301
Mobile 0439 724 959 Email: bettyhuf@outlook.com

Vice-President and Computer and Website Consultant:

Mick Ampt, Mobile 0434 149 045
Email: mickampt@aussiebb.com.au

Secretary: Glenys Wollermann, 22 Bellara Street,
Doncaster, Vic 3108. Tel: 03 9891 6652
Email: wensociety1@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

Committee Members:

Alexandra Frew: Email: amf8@bigpond.com

Jenny Gellatly: 189 Mont Albert Rd, Canterbury, Vic. 3126.
Email: jengell1@bigpond.com

Catherine Gosling: Mobile 0419 007 689
Email: cgosling2022@gmail.com

Colin Huf: same address as Betty Huf.
Email: colinhuf@westvic.com.au

Clay Kruger: Good Shepherd Retirement Village,
Unit 16/1-5 City Road, Ringwood, Vic 3134
Tel: 03 8838 8737 Email: krugerclay35@gmail.com

Beryl Nagorcka: 39 Kenilworth Crescent, Glen Waverley,
Vic 3150 Tel: 9802 6487 Email: bnagorcka@bigpond.com

Maira Nagorcka: same address as Beryl Nagorcka.
Email: magina@bigpond.com

Bronwyn Schier: 4/1 Park Avenue, Glen Huntly, Vic 3163
Mobile 0419 151 305
Email: bschier@bigpond.net.au

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

PO Box 4050, Box Hill South, Victoria 3128

Email: wensociety1@optusnet.com.au

Website: www.wendishheritage.org.au

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