



# wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

NUMBER 64 MARCH 2020



*Clockwise from top left: 1. Christ Lutheran Church, Noack, Texas (see pp. 3–6). 2. Pastor Christoph Dielmann at the Goethe Plaque Dedication (see p. 7). 3. Annual Luncheon in Ballarat, Victoria (see p. 3)*

## Join our Tour to South Australia in May

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our tour to S.A. in May. You do not need to be a member of our Society to join our Tour. See itinerary and booking details on page 2.

### CONTENTS

1. CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS . . . . .	2
2. PAST EVENTS. . . . .	3
3. RESEARCH . . . . .	8
4. LIBRARY . . . . .	10
5. GENERAL NEWS. . . . .	11
6. DIRECTORY . . . . .	12



# Calendar of upcoming events

## Annual General Meeting, Saturday 14 March 2020

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.**

## 170th Anniversary of the Arrival of the *Pribislaw*, 26 April 2020

The celebration will take place at Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and Heritage Garden, 100 Gardenia Rd, Thomastown, Victoria from 1.15pm. Dirk Wiessler and Rob Wuchatsch will speak about the *Pribislaw* and its life on and off the sea. (The museum will be open from 11.30am.)

All descendants of *Pribislaw* passengers are invited but an RSVP is essential for the talk. About 50 Wends came to Australia on the *Pribislaw*, which was named after the last Wendish prince, who died in 1174. The ship was built in Ribnitz, Mecklenburg in 1847. The Bernstein Museum at Ribnitz has kindly built a 1:40 scale model of the ship for Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and this will be unveiled at the 170th Anniversary celebrations.

Ziebell's Farmhouse (c.1850–51) at **100 Gardenia Rd, Thomastown** is Victoria's oldest German immigrant building. It is open every Sunday from 11.30am–3.00pm, excluding public holidays; and every Tuesday from 9.00am–12 noon, excluding public holidays. Admission: adults \$3, Children 50¢. To RSVP for the talk, email [enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au](mailto:enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au) For further information contact Gordon Johnston: [gordon@westgarthtown.org.au](mailto:gordon@westgarthtown.org.au) or 0418 552 557.

## Tour to South Australia, 17–24 May 2020

Save the date! Planning is underway for Lyall Kupke to lead our group on a tour of Wendish sites. The tour will take place in May, to coincide with South Australia's History Festival. **Please note that this will replace our usual March weekend tour.**

The proposed itinerary is as follows:

**Sunday 17 May:** Travel to Adelaide.

*Please make your own arrangements for accommodation. When we travel by car to sites, maps will be issued to ensure no one gets left behind or lost.*

**Monday 18 May:** Port Misery landing place; Port Adelaide wharf; Piltawodli Mission to the Kurna Aborigines (Schürmann); Klemzig Pioneer

Cemetery; Hope Valley Cemetery. Evening: attend the FoLA Presentation (Bethlehem House, Bethlehem Lutheran Church; Flinders St.). *Suggested accommodation in North Adelaide: Princes Lodge Motel; North Adelaide Lodge (ALC – Seminary) or Royal Coach Hotel, Kent Town.*

**Tuesday 19 May:** Barossa Valley (Rosedale, Hoffnungsthal, Langmeil, Bethany, Light Pass, Ebenezer, Neukirch, St Kitts). Evening barbecue with Geoff Saegenschnitter at his home in Greenock. Stay the night. *Suggested accommodation: Barossa Motor Lodge or Barossa Weintal Hotel.*

**Wednesday 20 May:** Peter's Hill, Riverton, Kapunda, Marrabel. Return to Adelaide or stay an extra night in the Barossa.

**Thursday 21 May:** Meet at Lutheran Archives, 27 Fourth St, Bowden at 10.00 am for a tour of the facility; in the afternoon attend the talk at Burnside Library by Lois Zweck (Topic: How did migration change the lives of German and Wendish migrants?) Evening: Dinner with the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia (venue to be confirmed).

**Friday 22 May:** Hahndorf, Lobethal and Birdwood.

**Saturday 23 May:** German Heritage seminar at University of Adelaide (Topic: German craftsmen in SA) – all day (costs \$40–\$50 which includes lunch and morning and afternoon teas).

**Sunday 24 May:** Free to pursue your own interests or wend your way home.

**Further information:** Attendees are

- responsible for organizing their own accommodation
  - not committed to attend every organized activity
  - will need to provide their own transport or organize to car-pool with someone
  - may choose to stay 2 nights in the Barossa and drive to the Archives on Thursday morning
  - must register in order to receive updates on the meeting places for Monday and other information
- For enquiries and bookings, contact Betty Huf; email [bettyhuf@outlook.com](mailto:bettyhuf@outlook.com)*

## Launch of Rentsch and Hundrack Family History Books, 3–4 Oct 2020

The launch will take place in Hamilton, Victoria. For information and Registration Forms, contact Monica Rentsch, 170 Sharrocks Lane, Croxton East, Vic, 3301, Tel 0438 735 239; email: [rentschdescendants2020@gmail.com](mailto:rentschdescendants2020@gmail.com)





1: Interior of St Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas.

2: Pastor Richard and Paula Noack, Pastor Colin, Daniel and Betty Huf at Concordia University, Austin.

## Past events

### Annual Luncheon, Saturday 26 October 2019

This event, held for the third time in Ballarat, Victoria, was very successful. Special thanks to our President, Betty Huf, for being our guest speaker. Betty had just returned from Serbin, Texas where she had attended the annual Wendish Fest. The following is John Noack's report:

Our Society's Annual Luncheon was held in the Lady Barkly Room at the Barkly Motorlodge in Ballarat. Over 40 members and friends attended and were seated at tables for 12 diners. This provided the opportunity for plenty of chatting and catching up. Diners enjoyed either pork with roasted vegetables or barramundi with salad. For dessert, the choice was pavlova or sticky date pudding with ice-cream.

Spare copies of the latest *Wendish News* were made available to diners for wider distribution to interested persons and family history books were on sale.

Those attending indicated that, because of its more central position for members in Victoria, Ballarat is a suitable location for our Wendish Luncheons.

"The Wends in Texas" was the topic presented by President Betty Huf. Her well-illustrated PowerPoint presentation provided a comprehensive picture of the continuing cultural activities, festivals and church life in Texas.

JOHN NOACK

### A visit to Serbin, Lee County, Texas, 21–22 September, 2019

#### The following is Betty Huf's report:

The Texas Wends conduct an annual Wendish Fest at Serbin, with the 2019 event taking place on 22 September. It was my privilege to attend this cultural function with my husband, Colin, and son Daniel. We were guests of Pastor Richard Noack and his wife Paula, who reside in Spring, Houston. On the day prior to the Fest, Richard drove us up to Austin where we visited Concordia University, which was established in 1926 by members of Texas's Wendish immigrant community. Today, between 10 and 15 percent of Concordia's faculty, staff and students are of Wendish heritage.

We then drove to the Wendish/German settlements of Fedor, Warda, Manheim, Winchester, Walburg, Giddings, Thorndale, Noack and Lexington, visiting the church and cemeteries at the majority of these places. Most of these congregations support their own Lutheran schools. After an overnight stay in Giddings, we set off to Serbin to discover for ourselves the history of the Wends in this area at their festival.

Wendish emigration to Texas began when several families settled there in the late 1840s. It was not until 1854, when over 500 Wends arrived, that a Wendish community was established. This large group of Wends, originally numbering 588, were led by lay members within the group, and Pastor Jan Kilian was appointed as their spiritual leader.



*Clockwise from top left: 1. Interior, Christ Lutheran Church, Noack, Texas. 2. Traditional female costume, Wendish Heritage Museum, Serbin, Texas. 3. Decorative ceiling motifs, St Paul Lutheran Church, Serbin, Texas.*

---

They arrived at Houston aboard the *Ben Nevis* after an arduous journey where the travellers were beset by cholera, yellow fever and other ailments. By the time they arrived at the location of their eventual settlement early in 1855, eighty-three men, women and children had perished.

Kilian, who was responsible for the religious life of the Wends, became the first Pastor of St Paul Lutheran Congregation and established its school. Serbin grew and prospered from a mainly farming community into a small town. An expansion of the Wendish settlements occurred when no more land was available in the Serbin area and many families moved to other areas and founded new towns. Wheat and corn were the two main cash crops grown with cattle ranching and cotton growing also undertaken. The steady influx of Wends who came to Texas in the 1860s and 70s made it possible to keep their traditions and language alive for several generations.

The annual Wendish Fest was first held in 1988, introduced to remind people of their heritage and as a way of celebrating Wendish history and culture, including folklore, customs and costumes. By incorporating heritage exhibits and demonstrations as well as a Wendish luncheon, attendees are able to enjoy a traditional Wendish experience.

As the Fest is held on a Sunday, proceedings begin with worship. An early arrival at Serbin ensured that we had a seat in the church for the English Church Service which began at 8:30 a.m. to an overflowing congregation. It was led by the local Serbin clergyman, Rev. John Schmidt, with Rev. Mark Barz, 3rd Vice President of the Texas District, Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, preaching the sermon. Prior to the service it was possible to hear some of the senior congregation members chatting to each other in German. Perhaps they also attended the second service conducted in the German language at 10.30 am. The Serbin church is a two-tiered church and boasts the highest pulpit in Texas. It is one of the twenty painted churches of Texas, typical of the style built by German and Czech emigrants of the 1800s. These churches were decorated in bright colours with hand-painted friezes and stencils on the walls and pillars, often using symbols that reminded them of their homeland.

After worship, we walked past St. Paul Lutheran School, which educates children from Beginners to Grade Eight. One hundred and fifteen students attend the school which places a strong emphasis on Christian principles and values.

Nearby is the Serbin Lutheran Cemetery, where hundreds of Wendish and German people are bur-





*Clockwise from top left: 1. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Fedor, Texas. 2. Pastor Colin Huf in the pulpit above the altar, St Paul Lutheran Church, Texas. 3. Decorated Easter eggs, Wendish Heritage Museum, Serbin, Texas.*

ied. A small section was devoted to Pastor Kilian and his family. Also noted was the Ben Nevis Memorial, which bears the inscription:

*Dedicated to the loving memory of those lost during the 1854 Wendish migration from Germany to Serbin. From September 10, 1854, until the dedication of the church cemetery on March 17, 1855, eighty-three men, women and children perished on route to this place. Most were buried at sea.*

All of the names and ages of the deceased were listed, with 47 being children under the age of 10 years.

We then proceeded to the Wendish Heritage Museum which preserves the history of the Texas Wends and is the only Wendish museum outside of Germany. It is a complex of buildings connected by porches. In the centre is the 'Peter' wing with comprehensive interpretive displays about the history of the Wends, both in Lusatia and in Texas. Exhibits included relics from the old country and Texas. Folk dress of Lusatia, the traditional black wedding dresses, and the beautifully decorated Wendish Easter eggs were some of the items on display. The building also houses the museum offices, a gift shop, genealogical library and archives. On each side of the Peter building are the historic St Paul School buildings, built in 1915. For the Wendish Fest, one of

these buildings housed displays of local history and demonstrations of traditional crafts of basket weaving, tating, quilting and sewing. The other wing housed a large display of painted Easter eggs for sale, with an industrious group of ladies demonstrating how these intricate patterns are made. There was also a German Christmas Market with woodwork articles for sale, as well as oodles of the noodles that the community uses as a major fundraiser to support the activities of the Wendish Society.

The outdoor exhibits included an intact log cabin, part of a dog-trot home (two log cabins connected by a breezeway or "dogtrot", all under a common roof), and early farming equipment. One room of the dog-trot home that Pastor Kilian lived in, and used as a church and school in the early days of his ministry, has been restored and was sited near the church in which he ministered in his latter days.

As the Wendish Fest is a day of cultural education, there were a number of Wendish costumes being worn. Weldon Mersiovsky, the Festival M.C. and a tireless advocate for Wendish heritage, was resplendent in his costume based on that of a *Hochzeitsbitter* (wedding inviter). Marian Weiderhold, the outgoing Director of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society and Sandra Matthijetz one of the talented Egg Decorators, were also wearing traditional costumes.



1. Richard Gruetzner, Betty Huf and Weldon Mersiovsky, the Wendish Fest Master of Ceremonies. 2: Traditional male costume and dudelsack (bagpipe), Wendish Heritage Museum, Serbin, Texas.



---

Prior to lunch we participated in a Church tour where one of the parishioners told us about the history of the building. An interesting artefact in the church was the processional crucifix which is the only remaining church item that was brought out by the original settlers.

The picnic ground in which the Fest is held is opposite the Museum. It boasts a huge pavilion which is able to seat several hundred people at long trestle tables for lunch. On the menu for the day were sausage, sauerkraut, green beans, noodles, beets, peaches and homemade bread. At one end of the pavilion was a stage on which the Moravian Polka Band provided music throughout the day.

During the meal the Wendish celebration of *Ptaci Kwas* (the Bird Wedding) was presented by costumed students of St. Paul Lutheran School. The children, under the direction of Weldon Mersiovsky, paraded up and down the rows of seated diners after they had completed their singing on the stage.

Shortly afterwards, I was given the opportunity to speak to the crowd. I was greeted with the traditional and very loud Texan greeting of 'Howdy, y'all'. I extended greetings from the Australian Wends and related that the Australian experience of loss of Wendish ethnic identity and language was similar to that experienced in Texas. Congratulations were extended to them on the effort they were making to invigorate and maintain an interest in their heritage by holding a function like their Wendish Fest. After ascertaining that there were a number of descendants of Pastor Jan Kilian in the audience, I extended special greetings to them as their ancestor had been a next-door neighbour of our Mirtschin ancestor

when they lived in the village of Döhlen prior to their respective emigrations.

Almost 30 copies of our September *Wendish News* were distributed to those who expressed an interest and came forward after I had finished speaking.

Throughout the Picnic ground, numerous displays were taking place. These included spinning, weaving, rug looming, basket weaving, stone ground corn meal, a 1918 Stone Grist Mill, corn shelling, homemade soap, sauerkraut making, noodle making, wine making, and sausage stuffing. There were also displays of Classic Autos, vintage firefighting and farming equipment and blacksmith demonstrations.

The auctioning of coffee cake at the Wendish Fest is held as a fundraiser for the Wendish Heritage Scholarship Fund. The scholarship program was established to encourage students of Wendish descent to learn more about, and develop an appreciation for, their Wendish heritage. Since 2014 a total of \$48,000 has been awarded to students of Wendish heritage.

Chelsea Beck, the enthusiastic incoming Director of the Society, is bound to continue its work of recording, maintaining and promoting their Wendish Heritage. The use of the Wendish language, which began to decline in the 1930s, has now passed into history. Today the Wendish culture continues to exist through the work of the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum, which publishes newsletters, hosts the annual Wendish Festival, and is open throughout the year with special events in Serbin celebrating the traditions and history of the Wends.

BETTY HUF

THANKS TO COLIN AND BETTY HUF FOR SUPPLYING PHOTOS.





## Goethe / Niquet / Golgerth Plaque Dedication, Sunday 24 Nov. 2019

The unveiling and dedication of a memorial plaque to nine children of early German settlers was held on Sunday 24th November at the Melbourne General Cemetery. The site was a previously unmarked grave in the “Other Denominations” section.

A short service was conducted by Pastor Christoph Dielmann of Trinity German Lutheran Church. He also accompanied on guitar three hymns, some verses being sung in German by the small gathering who attended. Stephanie Iwanowicz read Psalm 23, in German. John Noack spoke about the unexpected discovery in the Cemetery records of this grave of children of German Lutherans in the “Other Denominations” section. He also explained the reasons for the high infant mortality rate in 19th Century Melbourne – a lack of sewerage and the resulting poor hygiene. The deaths of three of his children may have contributed to Pastor Goethe’s decision to resettle in the USA. Pastor Dielmann, assisted by Mick Ampt, then unveiled the plaque.

The plaque records the nine young children who were buried in this grave in the years 1854-1871. They include three daughters of Pastor Matthias and Mrs Harriet Goethe, of Trinity German Lutheran Church, East Melbourne; one daughter of Pastor Johann Peter and Mrs Annie Niquet of St John’s Lutheran Church, Ballarat; and five infant children of Carl and Wilhelmine Golgerth.

Members of AKi (the Historical Society of Trinity German Lutheran Church) and members of FoLAV (the Friends of Lutheran Archives Victoria) formed a “Goethe Plaque Working Group” to undertake this project. The group is grateful for the generosity of donors who have made this project possible:



*Clockwise from top left: 1. Photograph of the Goethe family. 2. The gathering at the Goethe Plaque Dedication ceremony. 3. The Plaque. 4. Pastor Christoph Dielmann, Stephanie Iwanowicz and John Noack.*

Trinity German Lutheran congregation, Doncaster-Ivanhoe Lutheran congregation, Wendish Heritage Society Australia, Friends of Westgarthtown, Friends of Lutheran Archives Victoria and the Doncaster-Templestowe Historical Society. Special thanks to John Noack for the major part he played in bringing this project to fruition. John carried out extensive research, liaised with the Melbourne General Cemetery Trust and all interested parties, and completed all the necessary paperwork.

BERYL NAGORCKA

THANKS TO CLAY KRUGER AND MICK AMPT FOR PHOTOS



# Research

As well as carrying out further research for the 170th Anniversary Celebrations of the *Pribislav's* arrival in Australia to be held at Westgarthtown on 26 April 2020, Rob Wuchatsch has answered the following research queries received via our website:

Robin Thornton (England) re his ancestor F. L. W. E. **Schleicher** (Joel Blackburn had previously assisted Robin in 2011); Melissa Shaw re Johann **Garthe**; Lena Finken re J. E. **Garbrecht**; Dean Cvetkovic re the Sorbs; Robert Gribben re the **Bieske** family; Harold Haub re Nieder-Weisel; Chris Faisandier re C. F. **Faisandier**; Ben Dorman re the **Schunke** family, Bronwyn Stanford re Wilhelm Justus Gustav **Gluth** and Tracy Seiler re Michael and Agnes **Seiler's** family.

Betty Huf has organised a homeland tour for the **Mirtschin** and **Habel** families and friends, to take place in March–April 2020. Betty has also worked closely with Lyall Kupke to prepare the itinerary for our Tour to S.A. in May (see page 2). In August 2019 Betty accompanied Vicki Shuttleworth to the Warrayure Lutheran Church to view the altar painting by the artist Peter **Hansen**, and took a Tasmanian visitor, Michael Watt, on a tour of German and Wendish sites in the Hamilton district. In September, Betty toured Wendish settlements in the Serbin district of Texas, visited Concordia University and attended the annual Wendish Fest in Serbin (see page 3). Betty has done significant research on Colin Huf's grandfather, Alfred Blanchard, from Swanton in Vermont, USA. Betty has also researched the missionaries Reinhold and Edwin **Rohde** and answered queries on the following families: **Ott**, **Zschech**, **Hempel**, **Rentsch**, **Duschka**, **Zieschang**, **Gorman**, **Schier**, **Jeitz**, **Lehmann**, **Kotzur** and **Weissel**.

John Noack has done considerable research, not only on the Goethe Plaque project (see page 7) but also on recording the details and researching the life stories of many of the Germans buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

In August 2019, Wendy Schwedes (Reichenbach descendant) visited our Wendish Library to research her **Twartz**, **Lehmann**, **Teschner** and **Deutscher** ancestors.

## Eric Zschech: Champion Wendish Richmond Footballer

Given Richmond Football Club's current AFL premiership success, now is a good time to remember Wendish descendant Eric Zschech (1909 – 1981), one of their stars from the 1930s. Recruited from Minyip, Victoria, Eric was a centreman in Richmond's VFL premiership sides of 1932 and 1934.

Eric Leslie Zschech was born at Minyip on 19 June 1909, the son of Paul Bernhard (Ben) and Laura (née **Peucker**) Zschech. Ben (1875–1945), born at Hochkirch (now Tarrington) near Hamilton, was the son of Andreas and Anna (née **Starick**) Zschech. Andreas Zschech (1837–1902), from Rackel near Bautzen, arrived in South Australia in 1854 aboard the *Steinwarder* with his parents Johann and Anna and three brothers and a sister. The Zschech family then travelled by steamer to Victoria where they had friends at Hochkirch. In 1873 Andreas moved his family to the Wimmera District and settled at Rupanyup North.

A good sportsman who played cricket, football and tennis, Eric began his football career at fifteen with the Minyip seconds. While playing with the juniors, Eric often trained with the seniors and was impressed by the ability and style of their coach, the great Roy Cazaly. Eric made his debut with the seniors at 17 and at 20 won the Cameron Cup for the best and fairest player in the Wimmera League in 1928.

Eric joined the Postmaster-General's Department (PMG) in 1925 as a Telegraph Messenger at Minyip. In 1929 he transferred to the Telegraph Branch in Melbourne, then commenced with Richmond in the Victorian Football League (VFL), having previ-

## Wendish facebook sites

Our Vice President, John Modra, has found that many people like the immediacy of Facebook and quite a few overseas Wends have joined his site:

[www.facebook.com/groups/wendsdownunder](http://www.facebook.com/groups/wendsdownunder)

Another site well worth visiting is "Wendish United" (mainly USA):

[www.facebook.com/groups/2214353670/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/2214353670/) (*non-members of Facebook can also access this site*).





1. Sydney "Referee", 5 Oct. 1932 (Trove).
2. Swapcard (Rob Wuchatsch).
3. Adelaide "News", 14 June, 1934 (Trove).



ously been approached by Richmond's secretary. He was a wingman in Richmond's 1929 seconds premiership team, then played five games with the seniors in 1930.

In 1931 Eric played every game except one in the senior team, including the losing Grand Final against Geelong. He starred in the centre during the 1932 season, when Richmond went on to defeat Carlton to win the premiership. Eric, who was 5' 9" (174 cm) tall and weighed 11 stone 7 pounds (73 kg), wore the No. 25 guernsey and formed part of the legendary Tiger centre-line with Alan Geddes and Stan Judkins which played in four Grand Finals from 1931-34.

Richmond lost the 1933 Grand Final to South Melbourne by 42 points, but turned the tables in 1934, when they defeated South Melbourne by 39 points. Zschech, noted for his agility and pinpoint passing, kicked the first goal with a 60 yard drop kick. He also represented Victoria against South Australia that year in Adelaide.

In 1936, after 102 games for Richmond over six seasons, Zschech moved to Tasmania with the PMG on an eight-month exchange and was appointed captain-coach of Lefroy in the Tasmanian Football League (TFL). He was 26. He liked Tasmania so much he decided to stay. As he could not obtain a position in the PMG he transferred to the Commonwealth Taxation Department in Hobart. He said it was not solely for football purposes that he did not wish to return to Melbourne. He added, 'My

people live in the bush 200 miles from Melbourne...and as far as my home life with them is concerned I may just as well be in Hobart. I see them only once a year and I can still do that. I am sorry to disappoint Richmond supporters but there is more in life than football and all my interests are now centred in Hobart.' By 1938, Eric had left the tax office and was back with the PMG in Hobart.

Eric went on to play 91 games for Lefroy from 1936-41 and was captain-coach from 1936-39. Lefroy won the premiership in 1937 and Eric was awarded the George Watt Medal for best and fairest in the TFL in 1936, 1937 and 1939. After serving with the RAAF from 1942-45 he played 22 games for the newly formed Sandy Bay in 1945-46 and was a member of that club's 1946 TFL premiership side. He completed his football career by coaching Snug from 1947-49.

Eric later returned to Victoria and again worked for the PMG in Melbourne until his retirement in June 1974. He died in Melbourne on 3 October 1981 and was buried at Fawkner Cemetery. He married three times – to Joyce Stanton in 1939 (Div. 1944); Dorothy Anderson (1911-55) in 1945; and Alma Hoffmann (1909-70). Eric had two children with Dorothy, a son Colin (deceased in infancy) and daughter Diane.

Eric Zschech was inducted into the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame in 2005.

ROB WUCHATSCH  
PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY ROB WUCHATSCH.



# Library

In addition to cataloguing and covering new acquisitions, our Librarian, Janice Blackburn, has organized folders of the Agendas and Minutes of our Society's meetings since 1993. She has also organized several folders of funeral service orders, including obituaries. Recent acquisitions include:

## The family history of Martin and Elisabeth Rethus (nee Kielow), (on USB stick).

This family history, including photos, was compiled in 2019.

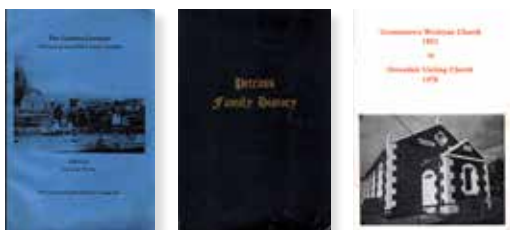
*We thank John and Ann Keller of Horsham, Victoria, for donating this family history to our Library.*



## Serbske pomniki – Trudla Malinkowa / Gertrud Mahling's book on Wendish monuments

This book, published in 2019, is written in the Wendish language. It includes two Australian memorials: Pastor Andreas Kappler's grave and an Ebenezer memorial. *We thank the author, Gertrud Mahling, for donating a copy of her book to our Library.*

## The Geelong Germans: a record of some 19th Century families, by Lorraine Phelan.



## Petrass family history 1806-1996, by Noelene M. Jenkinson.

## Germantown Wesleyan Church 1853 to Grovedale Uniting Church 1978, by June Winter and Lexie Fry

*We thank Committee member Beryl Nagorcka for donating these three publications.*

Our Library is open by appointment. Please contact the Secretary. See contact details in the Directory on page 12

PHOTOS OF BOOK COVERS: JOEL BLACKBURN

# General News



## Retirement of Joel and Janice Blackburn

Joel and Janice Blackburn are retiring from our Committee, due to health issues. They have been stalwarts of the Society for many years and we are very grateful for their loyal service: Janice as our Librarian and Joel as a former Vice President, and former Website & Computer Manager. Although she is stepping down from the Committee, Janice has very generously offered to continue to catalogue our Library resources. We wish Joel and Janice the very best for the future.

## 80th Birthday Greetings to Kevin Zwar



Congratulations to Kevin Zwar who will celebrate this special milestone on 30 March. Our last newsletter featured an article on Kevin's retirement from his role of handling research enquiries for our Society, for many years.

Kevin was Foundation President of our Society from 1986-1994, and served as President again in 2006-07. We wish Kevin many happy returns of the day.





## Wedding Anniversary Congratulations

Congratulations are in order for two special couples.

Gladys and Ed Koch recently celebrated 65 happy years of marriage. Gladys Koch (nee Burger) is a former long-term Committee member and former President of our Society. Ed is a former Committee member.

Clay and Gladys Kruger will celebrate their 66th wedding anniversary on 20 April. Clay is a long-standing Committee member. He currently serves as our Assistant Treasurer. He also keeps our membership records up to date, looks after our Society's emails, mails out our Newsletter and does many other tasks behind the scenes.

We congratulate them on reaching these special milestones and thank them for their continuing loyal support.

## 70th Birthday Greetings to Rob Wuchatsch

Congratulations to author and historian Rob Wuchatsch who will celebrate his 70th birthday on 27 April. Rob is a long-standing Committee member and former President of our Society. He served as President from 1994–2003 and then again from 2015–2016. He currently serves as our Treasurer and Research Coordinator. We are grateful to Rob for his dedication and efficiency in fulfilling these roles.

## Message of support from Texas Wendes during Australia's bushfires



Chelsea Beck, Director of the Texas Wendish Museum, sent a message of support in January, during the bushfire crisis. Addressed to our President, Betty Huf, the message reads:

Betty,  
Hello from your friends in Serbin, TX. We are praying for Australia during this disaster and we hope you are well. Many of our members have asked about our Wendish friends in Australia and I thought I'd reach out and let you know we are thinking of you.  
Chelsea Beck, Director, Texas Wendish Museum.

Betty Huf sent the following reply on 9 January:

Hello Chelsea  
Thank you for your email expressing your thoughts and prayers for us here in Australia as we experience the current fire emergencies throughout our country.  
As Australians, we expect to have some fires during the dry summer period, but the ones that we have had this year have stunned us all with their ferocity and extent. We are struggling to understand the magnitude of the fires, many of which will keep burning until we have significant rain to extinguish them. The majority of the fires along the east coast of Australia are in dense and mountainous bushland, and are very hard to control, especially when we have high temperatures and strong winds which cause embers to ignite spot fires several kilometres in advance of the actual fire front.  
On a personal level, Colin and I live in a pastoral, grassland area, and although all areas are dangerous in summer, any fire that came our way would pass

us very quickly and we expect to be able to save our home as we have ensured that our surrounds are as fire-proofed as possible. The closest fire to us so far here at Tarrington, has been in the Budj Bim National Park, 60 kilometres from our home. This was started by lightning, as most of the fires have been, and there are firefighters from our district who have been members of the many teams required to fight these fires.

We also have, like many parts of Victoria, experienced days where smoke has covered the landscape, in our case from Budj Bim and also, interestingly, from Tasmania, during our latest inundation.

The ongoing consequences of these fires will be enormous and we are all looking for ways to assist those who have been personally affected.

We again thank you for your thoughts and prayers and also wish you God's blessings on all you do in 2020. Colin and I have fond memories of our day at the Wendfest on 22 September 2019.

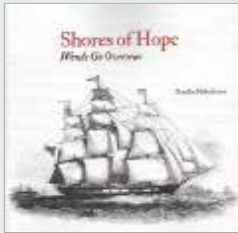
With Wendish Greetings,  
Betty Huf,  
President, Wendish Heritage Society Australia

On 10 January, Chelsea Beck wrote:

Betty  
I have been looking at the photos with horror. Before the museum, I was involved in disaster response and I cannot imagine the cost and time that will go to rebuild what has been lost. I hope they stop soon and am comforted to know that your home is as safe as it can be.  
Blessings to you!  
Chelsea



## Book for sale: *Shores of hope: Wends go overseas* by Trudla Malinkowa



This is the English translation of the book *Ufer der Hoffnung* about Wendish/Sorbian migration to Australia and to Texas. It won the 2010 Concordia Historical Institute's Award.

Our Society has copies available for purchase, for \$40.00 plus postage. Contact Clay Kruger – Telephone (03) 8838 8737 or Email: [wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wendsociety1@optusnet.com.au) or [ck\\_32@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ck_32@optusnet.com.au). Please make cheques or money orders payable to "Wendish Heritage Soc. Aust. Inc." or contact Clay for EFT payment details.

### Vale

Richard Krelle of Minyip, Victoria died on 28 October 2019.

Elizabeth Rouch (nee Matuschka) of Castlemaine, Victoria died on 18 November 2019.

*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.

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

**Newsletter Editor:** Glenys Wollermann

**Librarian:** Janice Blackburn

### Office bearers:

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

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

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

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

### Committee Members:

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

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

**Mary Cooper**

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

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

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

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

PO Box 4050, Box Hill South, Victoria 3128

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

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

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