



# wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

NUMBER 69 SEPTEMBER 2022



*Tour group at the graves of former members Frieda and Lena Mirtschin in the Ballarat New Cemetery (see page 4).*

## Invitation to our Annual Luncheon

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our Annual Luncheon on Saturday 22 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

## \*\*\*Annual Luncheon in Ballarat, Saturday 22 October 2022\*\*\*

Our Luncheon will start at 12.00pm for 12.30pm in the Urban Lounge, **Robin Hood Hotel**, 33 Peel St. North, Ballarat on Saturday 22 October.

*Please book by Saturday 8 October 2022 with Betty Huf.*

*Telephone: (03) 5572 4959.*

*Email: bettyhuf@outlook.com*

*Bookings are essential.*

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

Save the date! We thank our Tour Leader, Betty Huf, for offering to organize a Tour to Bendigo. Planning is underway. A proposed itinerary will be provided in due course.

## Annual General Meeting, Saturday 25 March 2023

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):*

*Telephone: (03) 9891 6652;*

*email: wensociety1@optusnet.com.au*

## Hochkirch and Homelands Tour, Easter 2023

Experience Easter in Bautzen and Hochkirch and watch the famous Easter Riders.

Visit Luther sites in Wittenberg and the world heritage listed Klemzig church.

Bookings still available.

*Contact Betty Huf:*

*Telephone: 0439 724 959*

*Email: bettyhuf@outlook.com*

## Rentsch Reunion at Tarrington, Victoria

*Date to be advised.*

The family history book, Rentsch family in Australia 1851–2020, is still available for \$70.00, plus \$12.00 for postage.

*Contact Ruth Walter: ruth.walter43@gmail.com*

*Mobile: 0435 211 606 or*

*Monica Rentsch: rentschdescendants2020@gmail.com*

*Mobile: 0438 735 239.*

## Hundrack Family History

The **Hundrack** Family Booklet is still a work in progress and a date of publication is yet to be finalized.

*If you would like to be kept informed on the progress of this project, please contact Julie Ballinger:*

*Email: rj7bal@westvic.com.au Mobile: 0448 376 522*

*or June Winter, Mobile: 0438 661 313.*

## Memorial to Gerald Stone in Oxford



Given the important role that Gerald Stone, Ph.D. (1932–2021), emeritus professor at Hertford College of Oxford University and Fellow of the British Academy, played in the service of Sorbian/Wendish scholarship in recent decades, a memorial is being established in the College Library in his honor. A section will be set aside for Dr. Stone's published works along with many of the books on Sorbian/Wendish topics published in Lusatia and in Australia and Texas. A pictorial plaque in the library section dedicated to Dr. Stone will remember him along with a list of the donor groups. Wendish Societies in Australia and Texas, as well as Sorbian friends and colleagues in Lusatia, are contributing to this Appeal.

(For information on Gerald Stone's significant contribution, see *Wendish News* No. 68 March 2022, p. 3 for Rob Wuchatsch's article "A tribute to Dr Gerald Stone, 1932–2021.")

## 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. His website is [www.svengrewel.com](http://www.svengrewel.com)



## Past Events



*Luncheon participants at the Robin Hood Hotel, Ballarat.*

### **Our Society's 35th Anniversary Luncheon and Country Tour to Ballarat, Victoria, 12–14 March 2022**

*We are grateful to Betty Huf for organizing these events, which were a resounding success. The following is John Noack's Report.*

**Our Society's President and Tour Organizer Betty Huf gave participants a very informative tour of the historical sites relating both to Ballarat's famous Gold Rush during the 1850s and to current features, which reveal a vibrant and modern regional city.**

#### **35th Anniversary Luncheon**

The Tour began with the Society's 35th Anniversary Luncheon, postponed from 2021, in the Urban Lounge at the Robin Hood Hotel, 33 Peel Street North, Ballarat. This Luncheon included PowerPoint presentations and display posters. Guest speakers were the Past Presidents from 1986 to the present day, who described some aspects of their experiences during their terms in office.

Highlights were (1) the Society's many City and Country Tours; (2) its successful annual dinners and well-attended celebrations of the arrival of ships and

their pioneering passengers to Australia; (3) its extensive Family History Library, located variously at Eaglemont, Doncaster, Ivanhoe and Box Hill South and (4) in general the enthusiasm, friendliness and cooperation of the Society's members.

In her speech Betty Huf highlighted the importance of the visit of Gertrud Mahling in 2018, and added that she has enjoyed organizing our Society's Country Tours. Robert Wuchatsch pointed to the Society's many activities and events, as described in its early Information Sheets and regular Newsletters. Robert recalled that the 150th Anniversary Dinner for the four ships *Godeffroy*, *Wappaus*, *Dockenhuden* and *Emmy* included 159 people. He concluded that our Society has experienced "good times and good fun. It has achieved a lot and is now in good shape." Gladys Koch spoke about the highlights of her four years as President, in particular the establishment of our website. John Noack, the founder and driving force behind the Society for many years, spoke about the challenging issues that he faced in his years as President.

Our Luncheon ended with the cutting and enjoying of the 35th Anniversary Cake, the taste of brewed coffee and further social interaction.



1. Shortest headstone inscription for Jane Whiffin (1830–1887)). 2. Betty Huf giving information on one of the emigrants buried in the German Lutheran section, Ballarat New Cemetery.

### Ballarat New Cemetery

After the Luncheon, Betty Huf gave us a guided tour of the German Lutheran section of the Ballarat New Cemetery, which was opened in 1867. Betty related short stories of the lives of some of the early German emigrants who are buried there. She also drew our attention to the graves of persons with Wendish background. These included Frieda and Lena **Mirtschin**; their parents Carl **Mirtschin** (1892–1976) and Sophie (nee **Kruger**) **Mirtschin** (1894–1994); Ernst **Burger** (1875–1950); his wife Anna Louise (nee **Jeitz**) **Burger** (1880–1952); Austin Geoffrey **Domaschenz** (1934–2007); Fiona Elizabeth **Domaschenz** (1961–1972) and Maria (nee **Kaiser**) **Hirt** (1840–1934).

### Ballarat Old Cemetery

This Cemetery was established in 1854, when the first Cemetery Rules had been gazetted. However, burials had been conducted here as early as 1848. Trustees were appointed in 1856 and were responsible for their denominations, which included the “German Lutherans”.

Our Night Tour was conducted by Ballarat’s “Eerie Tours”. We were shown the Memorials, which have been erected for the duty-bound Government Soldiers and also the rebelling Diggers

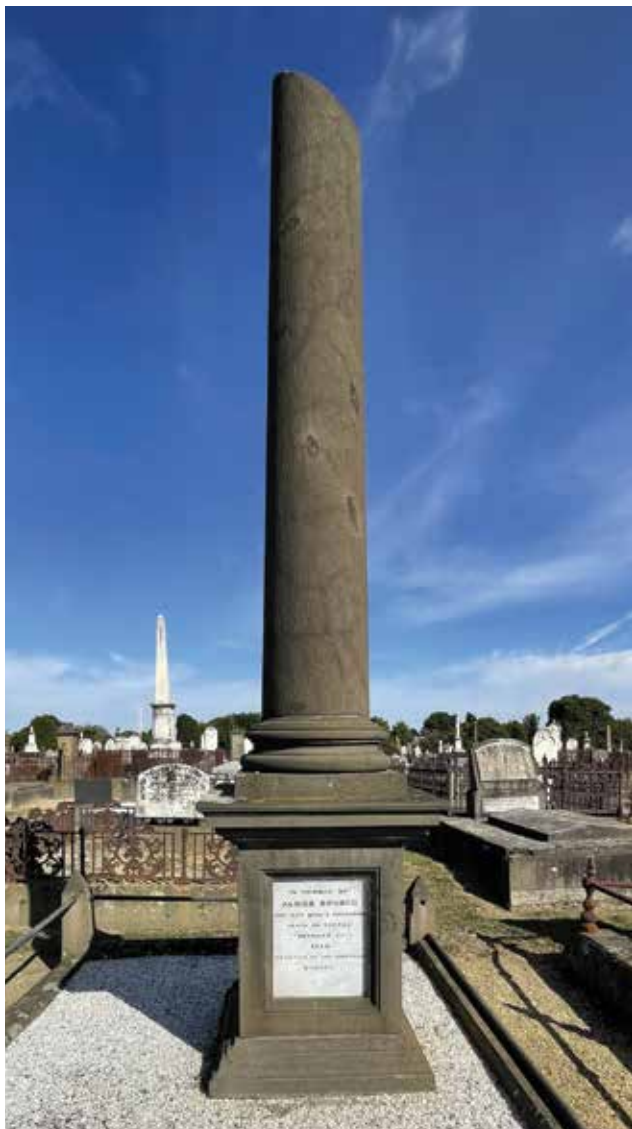
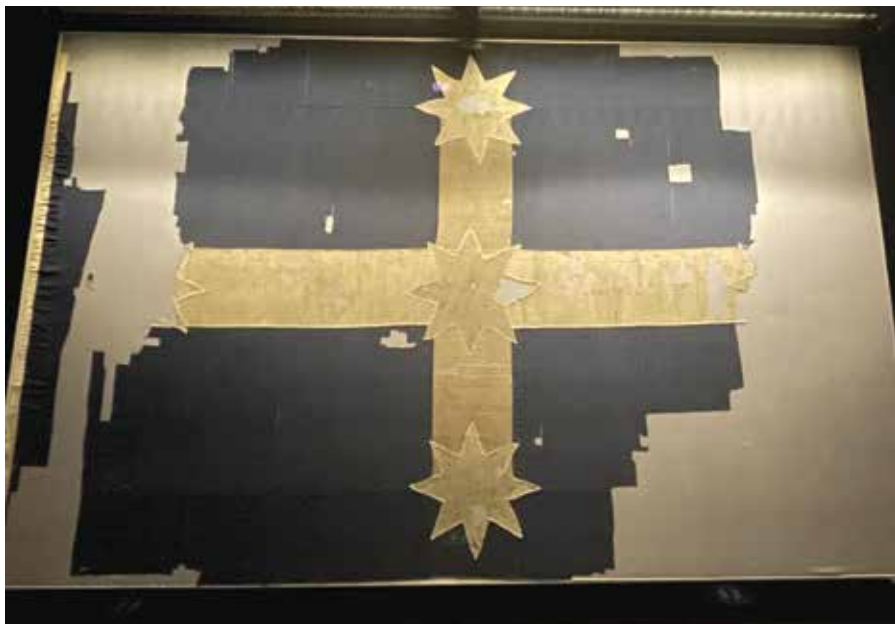
or Miners, who were killed at the 1854 Eureka Rebellion. A broken column denoted the grave of a child or young person whose life had been cut short.

A large area of open land consisted of unmarked graves of miners, and of many young children, who died during epidemics in the 1850s and 1860s. Nearby, the Chinese section included a shrine for burning incense, which was added after a lighted sky-rocket struck the daughter of the Gatehouse-keeper during a Chinese funeral. She subsequently died from the burns, resulting in such fireworks being prohibited. We also observed the shortest headstone inscription: “Gone, Mate. Jane Whiffin”.

### St John’s Lutheran Church

On Sunday 13 March at 10am, the Worship Service was conducted by Pastor Colin Huf. This Church, dedicated on 19 March 1876, is a solid brick structure. The hymns were ably accompanied by a competent band and the illustrated sermon, which featured various aspects of snakes, including cunning snakes, dangerous snakes and healing bronze serpents, will never be forgotten.

Our Society’s colourful Wendish posters were on display in the church hall during morning tea following the service.



1. Remnants of the original Eureka flag.
2. Broken column, symbol of a life cut short, on the grave of gold miner James Scobie, who was murdered in Oct. 1854.
3. Past Presidents Rob Wuchatsch, Gladys Koch, John Noack and current President Betty Huf cutting the 35th Anniversary Cake.

### Eureka Centre

This Centre is located in the Eureka Stockade Memorial Park. It caters for self-guided tours of Ballarat's early "Story of Eureka". Included are the original Eureka flag and paintings of the Miners' Rebellion and the Government's attack on them on Sunday 3 December 1854.

This Centre also houses the Ballarat Research Hub, which provides resources for local and family historians. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday from 10 am to 4.30 pm. Bookings can be made on email: [simonjacks@ballarat.vic.gov.au](mailto:simonjacks@ballarat.vic.gov.au)

### Evening Meal at St John's Lutheran Church Hall

Our evening meal at 6 pm, with its broad selection of delicious food, was organized by the Ballarat Ladies' Fellowship. It provided further opportunities for socializing.

### Historical Presentations

At 7.30 pm in the Church, Betty Huf provided a summary of the history, locations, customs and migrations of Wends, when they were in Lusatia, Germany and later in Australia. Her list of 229 Wendish families, who migrated from Lusatia to



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## Past Events ...continued

Australia during the 1800s, was available. This list included 49 families who had settled at some stage in Victoria's Western District.

Betty also provided detailed information on Ballarat's many early and often influential Germanic settlers. They are now all gone, but it is good that they and their hard work have not been forgotten!

### Begonia Festival

Some tour group members, who attended Ballarat's annual Begonia Festival at Lake Wendouree, were able to view the floats in the Grand Parade, which included the Chinese Dragon, large-scale new farm implements and vintage trucks. They could also visit the Botanic Gardens to see the colourful begonias in their glasshouses, other beautiful displays of flowers and the bronze statues or busts of Australia's previous Prime Ministers.

### Ballarat Fine Art Gallery

This Art Gallery claims to be the oldest and largest regional Art Gallery in Australia. The Gallery is grateful for its many patrons and their generous donations for the purchase of valuable and impressive paintings. Its wide range of exhibits includes classically mythological scenes, traditional portraits, figurative, realistic and impressionistic landscapes, expressionistic abstracts and recent photograph-based images.

On display are Arthur Streeton's painting "Vanishing Forest" (1934), which shows what is happening to nature in Victoria's Dandenongs and Edward Roper's painting "Aboriginal Encampment by River" (1862), which provides a glimpse of the traditional life and shelters of the Original Australians. This Gallery is also displaying Hans Heysen's majestic painting, "The Three Gums" (1915).

### Conclusion

There were 14 optional activities suggested for Monday 14 March, including the Nieder-Weisel Memorial at Smythesdale; Sovereign Hill; Gold Museum; Mill Market; Kryal Castle and walking tours of historic building and sculptures. Visits to such options ensured for the participants, an informative, action-filled and interesting long weekend in regional Ballarat.

JOHN NOACK

*We thank John Noack for his Ballarat Tour Report and photos.*

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## Annual General Meeting, Saturday 23 April 2022

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

We had 17 people in attendance, 5 apologies and 34 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 thanks that despite the coronavirus restrictions, we were able to conduct all of our usual meetings and activities over the past year, although some modifications were necessary. Betty gave an overview of two highly successful events: our **Tour to South Australia** on 17–22 May 2021, and our **Tour to Ballarat** on 12–14 March 2022, incorporating our Society's **35th Anniversary Luncheon**.

Betty outlined a number of projects that we are currently working on: the placing of a plaque on the grave of Andreas Kappler in Mount Gambier; the establishment of a register of Wendish heritage items in Australia; the design of a retractable banner to be used at our functions; and the compilation of a complete list of Wendish emigrants to Australia.

Betty concluded by thanking the Committee for their work. In particular she acknowledged the work of the Secretary/ Newsletter Editor Glenys Wollermann, the Treasurer Rob Wuchatsch and the Assistant Treasurer Clay Kruger.



Treasurer Rob Wuchatsch presented the Annual Financial Statement for 2021. He reported that we had a successful year. Our income and our expenditure are much the same as last year and the year before. Membership numbers are also fairly stable. The total credit monies held in accounts as at 31 December 2021 was \$24,889.18. This was an increase of \$1,388.36 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 2022, based on the 2021 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 2021 to 31 July 2022:

G. Allen, J. Ballinger, L. Bennett, R. Bransdon-Parkes, D. Brown, J. & J. Burger, P. Burger, R. Butler, C. Comas, M. Dalziel, B. Davies, D. Deutscher, P. Eagles, W. & J. Edwards, G. Escreet, J. Gellatly, E. Gorman, C. Green, H. Handreck, K. & A. Hattwich, E. Hayden, J. Hayhoe, S. Hayward, B. Healy, D. Herbig, J. & A. Hoffmann, C. & E. Huf, R. Jarick, P. Jenke, J. Johnstone, J. & A. Keller, S. Kemfert, E. & G. Koch, J. Kollosche, I. & Y. Kotzur, K. Lehmann, A. Lueders, L. Maggs, M. Matuschka, Y. Mibus, R. Mickan, I. Mirtschin, B. & M. Nagorcka, J. Pearce, J. Petschel, B. Proposch, P. Richardson, M. Robson, B. Ross, G. Saegenschmitter, N. Salzke, J. Scheetz, M. Scheetz, B. Schier, J. Schilg, G. Uebergang, B. Van Elst, V. Wehner, J. Williams.

*Please note: Membership invoices for 2023 are enclosed with this Newsletter.*

## Roll Reunion at Rainbow, Victoria, 4-5 June 2022

*We thank John Noack for the following report:*

The Roll family held a Reunion on 4-5 June 2022 at Rainbow and at Hopevale. This date marks the Centenary of the death in 1922 of **Johann Heinrich Röll**.

Johann was born in Prussia in 1842. He arrived in South Australia in 1867. In Tanunda he met **Christiane Elisabeth Rieschieck**, who was also born in 1842. They married in 1868. After working in the Warooka area on Yorke Peninsula, Johann moved with his family to Ni Ni Well in Victoria. In 1892, he organized the purchase of the property now called "Granhaven" at Hopevale, near Rainbow.

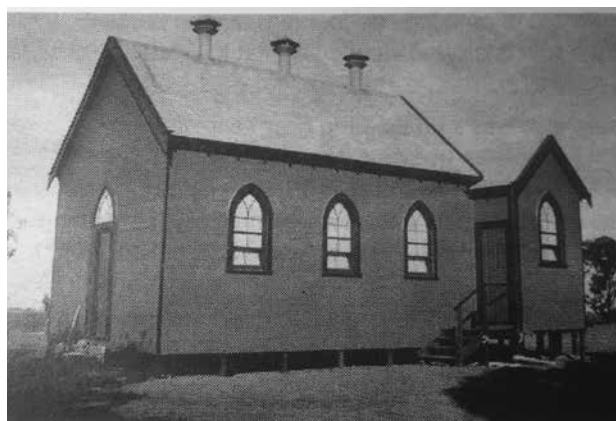
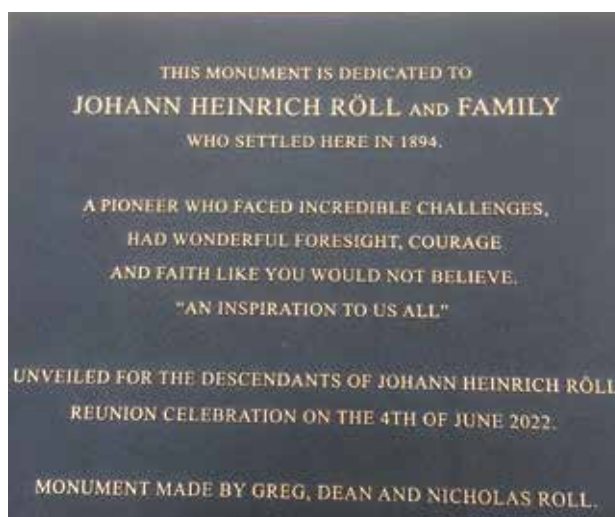
The Rolls, and their northern neighbours the Noacks, were amongst the early pioneering families in the Rainbow District. They were the original settlers on their Mallee farms at Hopevale. Between 1890 and 1894, the Rolls built their home and cleared their land, which is now occupied by Greg Roll.

### Tragic death of Johann Roll's wife

Johann Roll experienced tragedy when he was working at the Hopevale farm in 1895. His wife Christiane died at the age of only 53 years, while she was still residing at Ni Ni Well. The Lutheran Pastor Bachen rode on horseback through the Mallee scrub, with the aid of a compass for directions, in order to convey the sad news to Johann.

### The Noack neighbours

In 1892, the Noack family, with their sons Johann and Martin and their daughters Annie Gersch and Bertha McKenzie, also arrived at Hopevale. They



1. Roll Memorial Monument Plaque.
2. St Peter's Lutheran Church, Kenmare.

settled on land which was north of the Roll property. These two families conducted worship services in each other's homes. A photo is available which shows the two families at a service at the Noack homestead.



### The Roll descendants

The extensive Roll family tree in Australia begins with Johann Heinrich and Christiane Elisabeth Roll, and their large family of eight children: (1) Annie Preston; (2) Minnie Habel; (3) Lou Roll, who married Johanna (Josie) Uebergang; (4) Paul Roll, who married Hedwig (Hettie) Wenzlau; (5) Selma Uebergang; (6) Harry Roll who married Elsie Allan / Alma Tischler; (7) Marie Huf and (8) August Roll, who married Helene Adelheid (Addie) Ampt.

### Reunion events

On Saturday 4 June the Johann Röll Memorial Monument and Plaque was unveiled at “Granhaven”, Hopevale. Norelle Huf explained that traditionally family members had to be dressed in their Sunday best for the Church services, which included the wearing of hats, gloves and stockings by the women and suits, collars and ties by the men.

However, a problem arose on the wedding day in December 1914 of Johann’s daughter Marie and August Huf. When Marie, in her white wedding dress, was about to walk across the large paddock between the Roll home and the Church, a severe dust storm arose. Some helpers saved the day by wrapping a large sheet around the bride and carrying her to the Church, so that her dress and shoes stayed white for the ceremony.

After Norelle Huf’s presentation, we were given a demonstration of a 1937 MacDonal tractor pulling a stump jump plough around the paddock.

On Sunday 5 June, a worship service was conducted at St Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Rainbow, at which greetings were conveyed to the Roll family. Activities continued at the Rainbow Recreation Reserve, which included (1) registration (2) a very tasty lunch, (3) an informative illustrated PowerPoint presentation by Alan Preston of the five generations of the Rolls in Germany and in Australia and (4) the life story of Johann Roll, presented by Ian Roll.

There were many displays depicting the Roll family branches and photos. The noise level indicated that much conversation between friends and “long-lost” distant relatives was being enjoyed.

### Optional activities

These included viewing old film footage of working draught horses on a local farm, shown at the Oasis Rainbow cultural centre; researching the Rainbow Archives; examining historical photos and artifacts relating to the Roll family at Yurunga Homestead; the Kenmare State School, which was built in 1903; the Pella Pipe Organ and historical display at St John’s Lutheran Church at Pella and the Albacutya Silo Art at Albacutya.



1. Roll Reunion Cake, commemorating Johann Heinrich Röll (1842–1922). 2. Johann Heinrich Röll and his wife Christiane Elisabeth (nee Rieschieck).

Chug Fuller’s Farming Museum north of Rainbow, which has a Linke-Noack stump jump disc plough, was also open.

### A successful Reunion

The participants appreciated the hard work done by the Roll Reunion Committee members and their helpers. Clearly, everyone found plenty of Rainbow’s gold at this interesting and informative Roll Reunion.

JOHN NOACK





# Research

## Autobiographical notes by Professor Richard Dalitz (1925–2006)

*From 1985–90 the eminent Australian Wendish physicist Professor Richard Dalitz of Oxford wrote about his childhood and family background in Victoria. Here are extracts from the notes he prepared for his friend, Dr. Gerald Stone, who died in 2021.*



Dimboola, my birthplace, is a small town (population 2,000) on the river Wimmera, which flows north from the Grampians mountains of western Victoria until it disappears in the sands of the semi-desert to the north.

My grandfather Heinrich **Dalitz** lived on the ‘Settlement’, a cluster of small-holdings, several kilometres out from the town of Dimboola, near the river. He had some cows, one or two horses, a few sheep, quite a few hens, as well as land devoted to growing vegetables, with many fruit trees.

Heinrich had been born in 1861 at Klemzig, near Adelaide (South Australia), soon after his parents Mathes **Dalitz** and Maria **Habner**, arrived in Australia. By 1875, the family had settled at Robertstown, about 100 kilometres north from Adelaide, in a district where there were many German settlers. A few years after Heinrich had married Anna Elizabeth **Wuttke** there, during which time my father Friedrich Wilhelm was born, Heinrich and his family left Robertstown to settle in the Wimmera district of Victoria, which involved a journey of some 350 kilometres, mostly across semi-desert country. Heinrich’s main income was as a stonemason, primarily building chimneys, since houses were then generally made of wood, with a galvanized iron roof, wood being inexpensive and readily available. He had a large family (10 boys and 3 girls), more than a small holding could support, so that the boys had minimal education, having to go out to work as soon as possible. My father Friedrich Wilhelm was the oldest boy; he took up work as a blacksmith in Dimboola town. My mother (Hazel **Drummond**) was a school teacher at Dimboola and was of Scottish descent.

It is worth saying a little about the later history of this family. Of the girls, one died young by accident, while the other two married, one to a **Schulze**, the other to a **Tepper**, both being from German families. Of the other 9 boys, two became local farmers, having married into German families (**Möller** and **Hirthe**) owning farmland locally, two became gro-

cer’s assistants locally, one died in France in 1917, one became a country Post Office employee, one became a carpenter in a country town, another became a country tailor (and mayor of his town, for several decades) and the last boy was born mentally subnormal. All of the other wives (my aunts) had English surnames.

I lived only two years in Dimboola. By passing examinations, with my mother’s encouragement, my father became a Government clerk in Melbourne. My paternal grandmother died long before I was born, and I have only one recollection of ever seeing my grandfather. We visited Dimboola a few times but past disagreements between my father and his father meant that my father would not go out of his way to visit my grandfather on the Settlement. Just once, my grandfather (then aged about 75) was persuaded to come into town to see us for about an hour at an uncle’s house there. He was still alive when I left Australia but it didn’t occur to me to visit him before our departure. This illustrates how little he was mentioned in our family. It was a shock for me to learn later (about 1970) that he had still been alive in 1946. I had believed him to be deceased.

At primary school in Melbourne, I was clearly different from other boys, in having such a name as Dalitz, whereas they were called Smith, Ross, Warland, Marriot, McMullen and names like that; I was given the nickname ‘Fritzie’ in primary school. I was interested to know where my family name came from but I did not succeed in learning anything then. Probably my father knew little about it, and certainly he had no interest in the matter. My parents discouraged my interest in things Germanic; they had very little and lived frugally – it was much more important to look forward and to establish oneself in Australian society. There was no time to waste in looking backward.

My education was all in Melbourne, firstly at the local State Schools, then at Scotch College (by scholarship) for the last 4 years of secondary education. This secondary school was a Presbyterian foundation. I was not aware of any Germanic names there (although there were a few, such as **Ampt**, which I did not recognize as such) and I don’t recall



now any Sorbian (Wendish) names at all in my time (although I know there were some later on, such as **Matuschka**). In 1942 I became a physics and mathematics student at Melbourne University, supported partly by small scholarships and prizes which I had won in my school-days and living at home.

In 1946, I was awarded a small travelling scholarship by the University and was sent overseas to Trinity College (Cambridge) to do postgraduate research in theoretical physics, at age 21. Before leaving Melbourne, I married Valda **Suiter**, at the same age, so that we were able to travel to England together. I took my Ph.D. degree in 1950, after work at Cambridge, Bristol and Birmingham Universities.

### Discovery of my family background

The question of my family background was still at the back of my mind. My father died before I could visit Melbourne again, 15 years after my departure, and my mother knew nothing about my father's origins, except that his people came from 'near Leipzig'. It was only after she died that I suddenly realized that, if I was ever to find out about our family origins, I had better do so urgently, while I still had a few uncles and aunts alive who might know more. Unfortunately, they were all in Australia, far away from Oxford.

For some reason which I cannot trace (it may have been a remark by my uncle Oswald to the effect that he knew that the German our family spoke at Dimboola was different from that of other Germans because it included many words which they did not know), I had the idea that we were not really German but came from some group within Germany.

The first step forward came when I sat next to Macartney (a Fellow in Hungarian History at All Souls College) and asked him whether there might have been some non-German group 'near Leipzig.' 'Oh yes', he said, 'those were the Wends, but they have all gone now'. Some time later I asked John Simmons whether this was really true and his response was to copy for me some pages out of the "Sorbische Sprachatlas" (vol. 1) which showed the districts where Sorbian was still spoken today. He told me also that Dr. Gerald **Stone** at Nottingham University was the outstanding expert on the Sorbs in Britain.

By a lucky chance, I happened soon to receive an invitation to visit the Physics Department at Nottingham, which made it convenient for me to see Dr. Stone in person. That was my first contact with anybody who knew the Sorbs at first hand, and he kindly loaned me the book "Do cuzeje zemje" by Frido **Metsk**, about the emigration of Sorbs over-

seas. I could not read it of course, but fortunately there was a Slovak student in our Department, who had been visiting England when the 1968 affair occurred, and who consequently came to us to do his D.Phil. until such time as he could safely return. He found to his surprise that he could make sense of the Sorbian writing, although we had no dictionary. So we sat together, for many times, until we had been able to extract the sense of it.

The references at the back of this book included "Auswanderer nach Übersee aus dem Landkreise Cottbus im 19. Jahrhundert" by Gerhard **Krüger**. I could not find this book in any major library in Britain and I did not know about the Interlibrary Loan Service then. Finally I wrote to Dr. F. Metsk, asking whether he could tell me where a copy of Krüger's book could be seen. His reply was generous and immensely stimulating, for he sent me immediately a photocopy of the complete book, which included an Appendix list of Sorbian families who had emigrated overseas up to about 1900, giving the year of their emigration and their destination, taken from records of emigration applications held pre-war at Cottbus.

I wrote to Hamburg to ask whether any ship embarkation records still existed at Hamburg and I quickly learned that almost all those for 1850 and later voyages were available. So I went to Hamburg and spent a week working in the archives, listing all the members of the Sorbian families who went to Australia, what ships they sailed on and when, and their ages and villages of origin.

Finally, I had the good fortune to be invited to lecture at the University of Leipzig. My host, Prof. Gisela Ranft, made arrangements for me to stay in the hotel at Cottbus for a week after my lectures and drove me to the village of Wjerbno (Werben), to introduce me to its pastor, telling him who I was and what I needed to do. The pastor and his family were very hospitable and I spent a fruitful week working through the old church records, tracing the families who had emigrated to Australia.

I also met the village historian, Siegfried **Ramoth**, who was thoroughly familiar with the oldest church books concerning Wjerbno. From our analysis of the old church records, we were able to learn that Siegfried was a fourth cousin to me, and that his wife Elvira was also my cousin, although more remotely. Both of these families have become very good friends and I have had a number of happy visits to Wjerbno over the years. I am still in contact with them all.

*We thank Rob Wuchatsch for this article.*



# Items from Other Societies' Journals

## Louise “Schneider” Menzel (1881–1969)

The *Dimboola & District Historical Society Inc. Newsletter* (May 2022) includes an article by Elizabeth Hartnell Young on her great-aunt, Louise “Schneider” **Menzel**. Louise grew up in the Barossa Valley in South Australia.

As a young child, she learned to play the piano. She hoped to become a school teacher, but it seems that Friedrich, her father, would not allow it. With her mother Dorothea’s encouragement, Louise studied dressmaking at the Gawler Institute.

In 1905 Louise left S.A. for Warracknabeal, Vic., and established a successful business. She came to be known affectionately as “Schneider” (German for “tailor”, literally “cutter”) in recognition of her dressmaking prowess.

In 1906 Louise made an intricate wedding dress for Ida **Uebergang**, who married a cousin of Louise’s, Bernhard (Ben) **Menzel** from Wail. Louise’s skill was also displayed in the wedding dresses she made for herself and her sisters.

In 1908 Louise married her cousin, Johannes (Jack) **Menzel**. She cherished her wedding gift from Jack: a Thürmer piano, made in Meissen, Germany.

Jack and Louise farmed 640 acres near Dimboola East, following the lead of Karl August **Menzel**, Jack’s brother.

Louise played the organ each Sunday at the little weatherboard church at Kornheim, near their farm. The congregation included the **Sallmann**, **Janetzki**, **Fechner** and **Moll** families.

Louise and Jack raised four daughters. Louise was generous in her volunteer work for community and church groups. In 1948 Louise and Jack moved to Portland for a seaside retirement.

Louise died of cancer in 1969. Her beloved piano is now well cared for by her granddaughter, Mary Lou Puntton, at her home in Bendigo.

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## Vale

**We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of the following people who died recently:**

### Gladys Kruger

Gladys Irene **Kruger** (nee **Lehmann**) died on 5 August 2022, at 91 years of age. Her funeral service and burial took place at Lilydale Memorial Park on 18 August 2022. Gladys grew up on a farm near



Penshurst in Western Victoria, one of eight children of Otto and Ruth Lehmann. She was the loved wife of Clamour (Clay) for 68 years and loved mother of Colin, Faye, Grant (dec.), Errol, Neil, Stephen (dec.), Gina, Paul and Angela.

### Ivan Mirtschin



Ivan Mirtschin died on 29 April 2022, at 94 years of age. His funeral service was held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church Tabor, Victoria on 9 May. His final resting place is the Gnadenthal Cemetery at Penshurst.

### Rex Motton

Rex Motton (1929–2022) passed away peacefully on 20 July at Shepparton, Vic.



## General News



### 90th Birthday Greetings to Clay Kruger

Congratulations to our Society's Assistant Treasurer, Clay Kruger, on celebrating his 90th birthday on 23 July 2022. A celebratory afternoon tea was held in Clay's honour.

We are very grateful to Clay for his many years of loyal service in looking after our Society's finances and membership records, along with other tasks.

## 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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