



wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

NUMBER 70 MARCH 2023



*Edward (Ted) Reichenbach or "Ryko the Byko"
(see pages 6–7).*

Join our March Tour

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our tour to Bendigo on 11–13 March. You do not need to be a member of our Society to join our Tour. You may choose to participate in all or part of the Tour. See itinerary and booking details on page 2.

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Calendar of upcoming events

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

Bendigo has numerous historical sites. Many developed due to the involvement of German immigrants, who arrived in the area from the 1850s onwards, lured by the promise of a prosperous life from success on the goldfields.

The tour will include visits to view German graves in the Bendigo and White Hills Cemeteries; the earliest Lutheran sites; St Kilian's Catholic Church (one of the largest weatherboard churches in the world) with the grave of pioneer priest Dr Backhaus; Bendigo's Sacred Heart Cathedral and some of the buildings designed by the German architects Vahland and Getzschmann.

Our weekend happens to coincide with the Lost Trades Fair held at the Bendigo Racecourse, which features demonstrations of heritage crafts and traditional trades eg. blacksmiths, wheelwrights, rope makers, stone wall builders, knife forgers, weavers, leather workers, etc.

Some free time will be given for tour participants to follow their own interests, as there are some museums, an Art Gallery and other activities related to the mining history, which folk may wish to pursue.

*Please register your interest by 4 March with Betty Huf.
Email: bettyhuf@outlook.com*

Mobile: 0439 724 959

*A detailed Itinerary will be forwarded upon registration.
Registrations are essential.*

Annual General Meeting, Saturday 27 May 2023

*Please note the change of date to 27 May. Our Society's AGM will be held at 1.30 pm, followed by afternoon tea. All are welcome.

The venue is the meeting room at St Aidan's, 12 Surrey St, Box Hill South, Victoria.

Contact Glenys Wollermann (Secretary)

Tel: (03) 9891 6652

Email: wensociety1@optusnet.com.au

Rentsch Family History Book

The 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.

175th Anniversary Celebrations in 2025 of the Arrival of the *Pribislaw*

Date to be advised.

Genealogist and Family Researcher in Germany

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

Books for Sale



Mirtschin families in Australia 1851–1990

Copies are available for \$10.00 plus postage.

Contact Glenys Wollermann (Secretary):

Telephone (03) 9891 6652 or

email g.wollermann@y7mail.com



Past Events



Luncheon participants at the Robin Hood Hotel, Ballarat.

Annual Luncheon in Ballarat, Saturday 22 October 2022

We are very grateful to Betty Huf for organizing this event, and for acting as Speaker when the Guest Speaker, Cliff Brinkmann, was suddenly taken ill. The Luncheon was attended by 35 members and friends. We thank John Noack for the following Report.

Venue

We gathered at the Robin Hood Hotel, 33 Peel Street, North in Ballarat, Victoria. Ballarat is a convenient location for many of our members who live in rural areas.

Wendish Display Boards

These provided colourful pictures of Wendish costumes, customs and scenery in Lusatia, which includes the River Spree and its popular “Spreewald”.

PowerPoint Presentation

Unfortunately, our arranged Speaker was unable to attend this Luncheon, but our President and Researcher, Betty Huf, was able to show us the very well-prepared PowerPoint Presentation about some members of the well-known and successful Deutscher family here in Australia. This presentation consisted of 94 slides.

Clyde Engineering Works

Betty highlighted the work of the ‘Clyde Engineering Works and Foundry’, which was owned by W. Irving in 1902 and after 1904, was also owned by C.T. Deutscher. An old business sign includes the words: “C.T. Deutscher & Son, Engineers, Plumbers, Ironfounders etc., Lonsdale St, Hamilton”. This “Clyde Engineering Works and Foundry” had an interesting motto: “What we say we do, we do do”. Deutscher companies have produced engines, farming equipment and mowers. This family has conducted business continuously in Ballarat since 1923.



1. Deutscher descendants at the Luncheon with photos of their Deutscher ancestors. L–R: Daryl Deutscher, Noel Taylor, Wendy Schwedes, David Deutscher. 2. President Betty Huf with a Past President, Gladys Koch.

Deutscher: A Family History 1848–1986

This excellent and very informative family history book was compiled and published by Ray Deutscher. It is of interest to all Deutscher descendants and to all those interested in the early pioneering days of the first German settlers in the Western District and the Wimmera.

Wendish Pioneer Michael Deutscher

A pioneering Deutscher ancestor in Australia was Michael Deutscher, who was born in 1811 at Doberschuetz in Upper Lusatia, Saxony. His father was a flour miller at Zschorna. Michael married Johanna Christiana Eleonora **Schwarz**, who was born in 1815 at Seitschen in Saxony.

When Michael’s father died in 1836, Michael inherited the mill and he continued in this prosperous business. However, in 1848, when there was widespread political unrest throughout the German kingdoms, Michael decided to emigrate to distant Australia, on the opposite side of the world. He probably assumed that he would never again return to his European home.

From Zschorna to Hamilton

Michael and Christiana Deutscher had eight children. Five were born at Zschorna, Saxony between 1836 and 1848, one was born at Rosenthal, one at Portland and the eighth child, Johann, who later moved to Murtoa in Victoria’s Wimmera region, was born at Hamilton.

The dates and locations of these births indicate when and where the family members were living

both before and after their long and challenging pioneering journey from Europe to Australia.

C.T. Deutscher & Son

Michael and Christiana’s first child, Johanna Carolina, who was born in 1836, became connected with the Huf family, by marrying Carl Huf. The third child, who was born in 1842 and who later married Johanna Magdalena **Heine**, was Carl Traugott Deutscher. This son was the C.T. Deutscher who was the owner of “Clyde Engineering Works and Foundry” in Hamilton after 1904. He died in 1930, aged 87 years.

“Gem” Engines

Carl’s signs after 1907 included his son, Heinrich or Harry, who was able to help in promoting business opportunities. From 1907 they manufactured motors, including in 1909, the “Gem” Oil and Benzine engines. Every third day, the furnace was set and all castings were poured as required.

In 1910 there was a special order from a farmer at Coleraine for a 20 horse-power traction engine and also orders for seven “Gem” engines. In 1915 the factory even manufactured a very large metal road roller for the local Shire.

The “Lamb” and the “Sheepdog”

Harry Deutscher was a big man, with a kind and generous disposition. He was also a very devout member of the religious group called the “Plymouth Brethren”. He stressed the need for spiritual values and his co-workers at the factory liked to call him the “Lamb”.



In contrast, Carl's business partner from 1910 to 1919, named Charles Walker, liked to be called the "Sheepdog", because, when the local "derelicts" and "down-and-outs" came to Harry Deutscher for one of his many generous handouts, Charles Walker took on the task of sending them off the premises.

A Ballarat Business

Some problem with the management arose in the early 1920s. The Clyde Works was sold to local Hamilton farmers and businessmen and in 1922 Harry moved to Ballarat. He continued to manufacture his "Triumph" engine, rated at 5 horse power, and he designed and produced a post hole borer.

During the early 1930s Depression, when many businesses collapsed, including the Linke-Noack Implement Factory in Freeling, Harry kept working with a travelling workshop, repairing engines and machinery throughout Western Victoria.

Lawn Mowers

When Harry died, his only son Eric, who had started in the business in 1945, took over the management. He observed the need to regularly cut the fast-grow-

ing grass, so in 1958, the firm manufactured industrial grass cutters. It also produced ride-on mowers until 2008. The Company's mowers were sold all around the world.

Crossing Australia by Bike

Harry Deutscher's nephew, Edward (Ted) Reichenbach, who started working in 1906 at Clyde Engineering, achieved fame in 1914 by breaking the world record for cycling from Adelaide to Darwin. Ted changed his surname to Ryko, and became known as "Ryko the Byko". See *Michèle Adler's article on Ted Reichenbach on page 6*

Other Deutscher Accomplishments

The interesting and informative PowerPoint Presentation on Clyde Engineering by "The Hufs of Hochkirch Productions" contains many old photos, lots of colourful illustrations and interesting information about the lives and accomplishments of the original, subsequent and current members of the Deutscher family.

JOHN NOACK

PHOTOS: MICK AMPT



Top: Betty Huf giving her well-prepared PowerPoint presentation.

Bottom: Members and friends enjoying the Luncheon.



Research

Edward (Ted) Reichenbach (1892–1968)

We thank Michèle Adler (nee Ryko) for the following article and photos.

Edward **Reichenbach** or **Ted Ryko**, as he became known, was my grandfather. I didn't know him. What I did know was that he was a cyclist of some note and had set a record for riding across Australia from south to north in 1914. From my family's point of view, whenever he came up in conversation, which wasn't often, I was always told that he was a 'crazy man'.

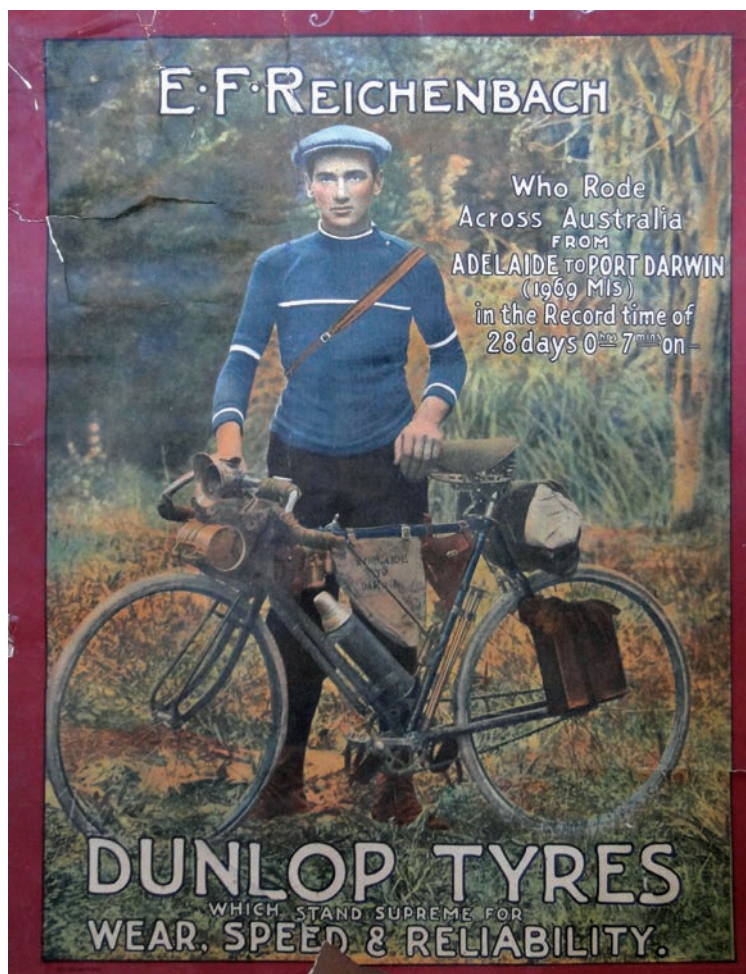
Ted and his wife were estranged. She lived in Sydney and he lived in remote Bundooma, Central Australia, 150 km south-east of Alice Springs. He came to visit the family in Sydney once, around 1956. I was about 10 years old. Until 40 years later, that was about all I knew about my grandfather. A chance phone encounter with researcher Roslyn Poignant set me on a path of discovery about an extraordinary man. Here is some of his story.

Ted was born in Tullyvea, near Nhill, Victoria in 1892, a second generation Australian. Ted's father was Carl Ludwig **Reichenbach** from Gawler, South Australia and his mother was Alma **Deutscher**, born in Hamilton on 26 April 1867. She was the eldest child of Carl Traugott and Johanna (Anna) Magdalena Deutscher.

The original **Deutscher** immigrants were Michael **Deutscher** and family. They came from Doberschuetz, a village near Bautzen in Upper Lusatia, Saxony, arriving in Australia in 1848. They were Wends. **Deutscher** is a well-known family name in the Hamilton area, Michael **Deutscher** being a Lutheran pioneer there. People may know of the Clyde Engineering company that was operated by Ted's uncle (Harry (Heinrich) **Deutscher**, the youngest brother of Ted's mother).

Further north in Glenlee, near Nhill, the **Reichenbachs** were farming but Ted, the eldest boy, didn't want to take up farming. He wanted to be a photographer, much to the chagrin of his father and mother. It was expected in those days for the eldest boy to take on the farm.

So it was that the boy left school at 15 years of age, moved to Hamilton and went to work for Uncle Harry. He trained as a mechanic installing and repairing **Deutscher** engines. He travelled widely on a bicycle all over Victoria and NSW for his work, riding up to 1000 miles per month. For recreation

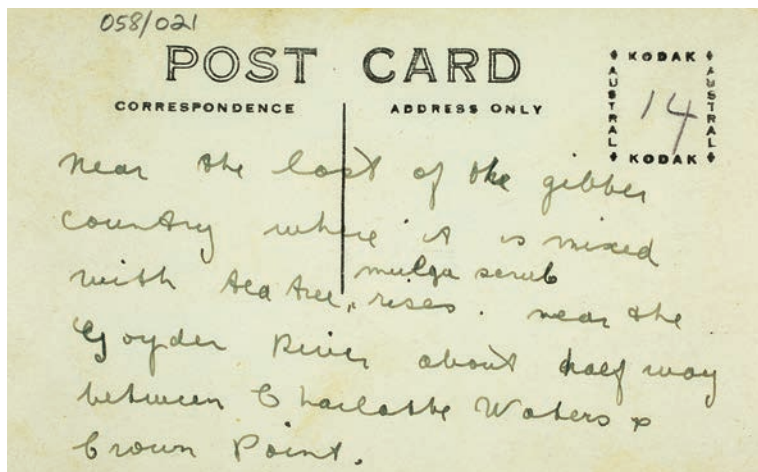


The official 1914 Dunlop Poster of Ted Reichenbach's record-breaking ride.

he engaged in long distance cycling. It was said that he had legs like iron.

When Dunlop Tyres offered a prize of £50 to the person who could break the long distance cycling record from Adelaide to Darwin, he and a mate, Jack Fahey, took on the challenge. The young men left Adelaide at noon on 14 May, 1914 determined to ride straight through the desert to the Top End. The event was well publicized in the local newspapers and many well-wishers farewelled them including Albert McDonald, the then record holder and George Broadbent, the map-maker.

The young men followed the railway line as far as it went, sometimes riding on the ballast because the sand drifts were too difficult to negotiate. Later Ted followed the Telegraph line, riding on the maintenance track or on camel pads. He often rode at night and navigated by the stars. He took plenty of photographs along the way, many inscribed in his distinctive handwriting. He turned these 'ride' images into postcards and they are now collectors' items. The Northern Territory Museum and Art Gallery has a set of them and other libraries and museums around the country have a few as well.



Clockwise: 1. European end of Cavenagh St, Darwin, N.T. 2. Postcard describing the terrain of the 1914 bike ride. 3. Ryko on a photographer's bush scaffold at Alligator Head, N.T. 4. Government Offices in Darwin.

As misfortune would have it, near Oodnadatta Jack fell and damaged his ankle and couldn't ride but Ted continued alone for the rest of the journey, carrying his bike for 40 miles over the Depot sand hills and swimming the flooded Finke River. Getting enough fresh water was a major problem as was the gear mechanism on his bike. Riding on the gibber plains was tough going.

Did Ted break the record? Ted arrived in Darwin at the Post and Telegraph Office at 12.07 pm on 11 June. The new record was now 28 days and 7 minutes. He broke the previous record by 15 hours.

Ted changed his surname from Reichenbach to Ryko – Ted Ryko is much easier to pronounce and it rhymes with bike-o. He set up a shop in Cavenagh Street in the Chinese district of Darwin (cheap rent) and sold his postcards for 4d each. At every opportunity he went off on excursions to explore and add images to his collection. He was said to have more knowledge of the Territory than the Administrator.

All appeared to be going well; Ted was young, fit and a hero in the eyes of the locals and the cycling fraternity. He was off adventuring taking photographs of everything. He recorded buildings,

Indigenous people, Chinese people, processions, workers, bridges ... until World War I broke out just 8 weeks after his arrival.

German paranoia set in quickly. For two months after his arrival Ted was a hero, the next moment he was a man to be wary of, to be watched, to be hauled before the Authorities for questioning. Commonwealth Security officers raided his shop, took his precious maps and confiscated his postcards.

Why? He was German of course and he took photos of everything. He'd changed his name. The cycling trip was considered as merely a 'cover'; he was clearly a spy. For the next three years Ted led a wild life, an extraordinary life.

Michèle Adler and her partner Rod McMillan have created an audio drama about Ted's adventures in the Top End from 1914–17. It runs for four hours in 15 episodes. Ted didn't leave a diary but Michèle has pieced together Ted's whereabouts in those remarkable three years by linking up remaining Ryko photographs with newspaper articles written by Ted and others. She has tracked his movements and discovered so much about this 'crazy man' who was her grandfather.



One of his enduring legacies is his images – in particular those that document Indigenous life from across the Territory, everywhere from Wyndham in the west to the Roper River in the east and the islands to the north of Arnhem Land.

It is pertinent that in this current era of Voice, Truth and Treaty for First Nations people of Australia, that in 1917 Ted Ryko, on behalf of Indigenous Australians, recorded and published in the *Northern Territory Times* newspaper a treaty (petition) to the N.T. Government from the countrymen of the Crocodile Islands. It was perhaps the first of its kind.

Ted Ryko is regarded in some circles as a National identity and he is certainly a Northern Territory icon. He was a hero in his time and a legend well ahead of his time.

Michèle and Rod would be very interested to hear from anyone who could help raise the public profile of this extraordinary man, particularly with contacts in the film industry or the media.

For more information and links to the Audio-drama go to: www.ryko-project.com.au or www.adland.com.au
Contact Michèle Adler: michele@adland.com.au
Telephone (03) 5145 5422.



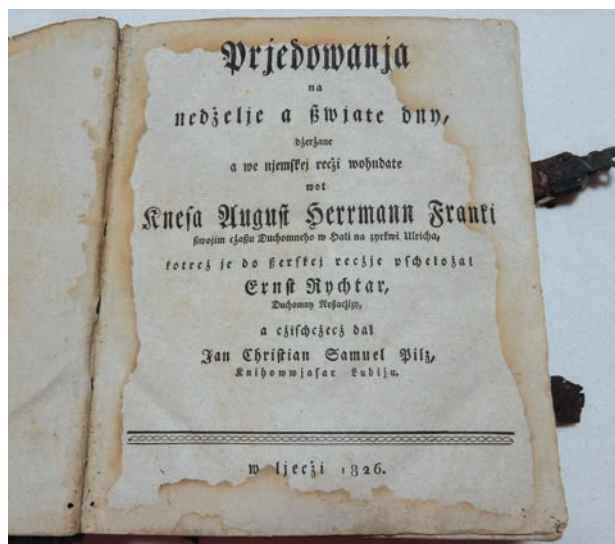
E.F. Reichenbach (left) and J.A. Fahey (right) departing from the Adelaide G.P.O. on 14 May 1914 [The Adelaide Chronicle, 23 May 1914]

A Wendish book from the Australian Gnadenthal (Gracious Valley)

A volume of Wendish sermons – testimony to the national and religious roots of the population

This article was first published in a Wendish journal, “Pomhaj Boh”, in Germany in July 2022. The author, Trudla Malinkowa (Gertrud Mahling) then translated it from Wendish into German. We are grateful to Sonja Fischer of Oz German Translation Services for this translation from German into English:

In the small private museum Ray Burger set up on the occasion of a family reunion in 1983 in the house of his Wendish ancestors on the family farm in Gnadenthal, Australia, he kept, among other things, a voluminous Wendish book from 1826: “Prjedowanja na nedželje a sswjate dny” (Sermons for Sundays and Holidays) by August Herrmann Francke, which Ernst Richter, pastor in the Wendish parish of Nostitz, translated from German into Wendish at the time and had printed in the neighbouring town of Löbau. Today, only remnants remain of the dignified leather binding with two buckles that once encased the 707-page book. The woodworm has left numerous holes in



Wendish sermon book by August Herrmann Francke (1826), which was used by Wendish emigrants in Gnadenthal, Victoria, Australia.

the wooden covers and the yellow discolouration of the paper in some of the page edges indicates that the book has been lying in the damp for a long time.

In itself, the book has no rarity value. Copies of this edition are kept in libraries. Copies may also be found here and there in attics in the Wendish Protestant area of Lusatia. The special feature of



the Gnadenthal copy is that it is a testimony to the national and religious roots of our fellow Wendish country folk who emigrated from Lusatia to Australia in the 19th century.

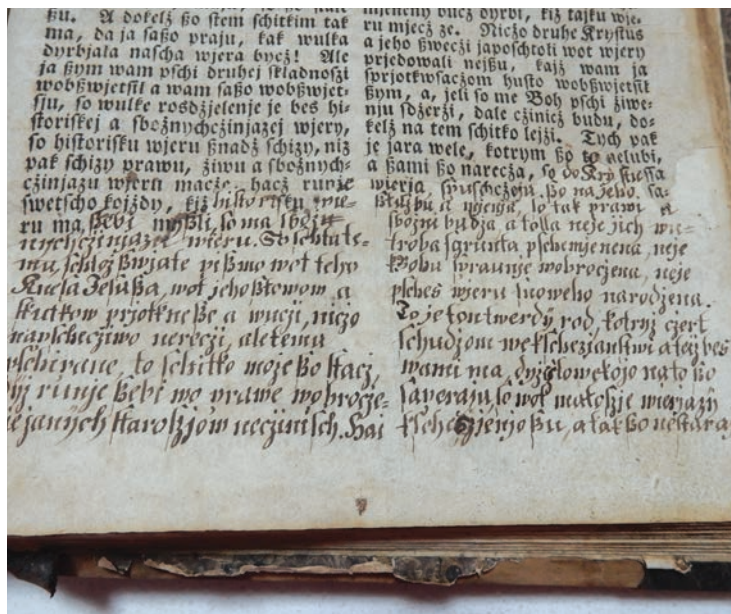
The settlement of Gnadenthal (now part of Peshurst) in the state of Victoria was founded in 1853 by Wendish emigrants from Upper Lusatia. At that time, other Wendish-German settlements were established in the area, such as Neukirch (today Byaduk) and Bukey / Hochkirch (today Tarrington). Andreas Albert from Rachlau, Peter Burger from Meschwitz, Johann Mirtschin from Döhlen, Michael Schmidt, Johann Stephan from Groß Saubernitz and Andreas Urban from Weigersdorf – most of them with families were among the Wendish who found their new home in Gnadenthal.

The small settlement did not have its own pastor. The German Lutheran pastor in nearby Hamilton was responsible for the spiritual care. In the early years, the pastor came to Gnadenthal every sixth Sunday, where he celebrated German services in the house of Andreas Urban or on the farm of Peter Burger. On the other Sundays, the residents usually gathered at the Burger family home for Wendish devotions, which they arranged themselves. Presumably Francke's book was used at such gatherings and Wendish sermons were read from it.

It is not known who owned the book at that time, as the owner did not mark it with their name. It can probably be assumed that it was in the possession of Peter Burger or Andreas Urban, where the Wendish devotions took place. Of these two, Andreas Urban is best known as an inspiring Christian. In Lusatia he lived as a shoemaker in Weigersdorf, where he was instrumental in founding the Old Lutheran congregation in 1843 and was its leader until his emigration in 1851. He also held this office in Gnadenthal, where the pious old man – he had emigrated at the age of 61 – was called “Father Urban”. He did not forget Lusatia in his new homeland but collected money among the Wendish in Australia and sent it to the deeply indebted community in Weigersdorf.

In the book, about fifteen pages are damaged, that is, their lower part is torn out. This damage, however, has been repaired with much effort and skill. The missing parts of the pages have been replaced by new paper on which the missing sentences have been written in pen and ink with the help of thin lines drawn with a pencil. The scribe's effort to adapt his handwriting to the printed letters is evident. To complete the text, he needed the torn-off parts of the pages or an undamaged copy of the same book.

From today's perspective, the skill with which the work was carried out is surprising. It is likely that



Damaged and repaired page with supplemented text.

the book repair already took place in Lusatia – possibly first by a bookbinder who inserted new paper in the damaged places, and then by a teacher or other scribe who added the missing text. In the vast expanses of Australia, which were not settled until the middle of the 19th century and where everyone first had to make a living, such a proper repair would hardly have been possible at the time.

The effort applied testifies the high value that the book represented for its owner, and this not just because of its religious content but also its financial cost. The painstaking repair was cheaper than buying a new copy. Who would spend so much time and labour on a damaged book today?

After the death of the museum founder Ray Burger († 2012), his relatives in 2018 gave twelve historical books from the archives of the family museum in Gnadenthal to the church archives of the Lutheran congregation in Tarrington (Hochkirch) for temporary safekeeping. Under the care of archivist Betty Huf, who is also President of the Wendish Heritage Society Australia, they were stored there in a fireproof room. Five of these books, four in German and Francke's 1826 Wendish sermon book, were finally transferred to the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide in May 2021. In this central church archive, the almost two-hundred-year-old volume of Wendish sermons now bears witness to the national and religious roots of the Wendish who came to Australia from Germany in the mid-19th century and found their new home here.

TRUDLA MALINKOWA (GERTRUID MAHLING)

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY SONJA FISCHER

PHOTOS: BETTY HUF



Vale

Joel Blackburn (1939–2022)

Joel and Janice Blackburn served as committee members of our Society from 2002–2020. Joel was our Vice-President and Computer Manager from 2004–2014 and Interim President in 2014–2015, until illness forced his retirement. Janice has served as our Librarian since 2007. Joel died on 23 December 2022 and his funeral service was held at Eltham on 4 January 2023. This tribute is an edited version of Janice's eulogy to Joel.



Joel was born in Richmond on 24 September 1939 to James Andrew Blackburn and Jean Emma Blackburn (née Stahl). The first of three sons, Joel spent the next 23 years of his life living at Slater Street, Northcote in a house built on land which had been part of a dairy farm

owned by his German great-grandfather.

Joel attended Westgarth Primary School and was a model student, always at or near the top of his class. One of his vivid memories of primary school was returning to school after his lunch break on the day that World War 2 ended. As a little six-year-old boy he was so fascinated watching all the planes in the sky that he was late back to school and was punished for his lateness. He always remained indignant about this, thinking that his teacher could have made an exception to the rules on such a momentous day in Australian history.

After primary school Joel went on to Northcote High School where once again he excelled academically, specialising in the fields of science and mathematics. He won a Commonwealth scholarship to study for a Science degree at Melbourne University. He was also awarded a teaching studentship.

Whilst at Uni he joined the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club and participated in many bushwalking and mountaineering trips. He had always had a love of the Australian bush and nature from his early childhood days as a Boy Scout. In fact, he eventually became a Queen's Scout, the highest honour conferred upon a Scout.

After completing his degree, Joel studied for a year at Teachers' College and was appointed to a position at his old school, Northcote High School. However, in between graduating and attending Teachers' College he went on another bushwalking and mountaineering trip to Tasmania and decided to call

in at Port Arthur, the old Tasmanian penal colony. I too was travelling around Tasmania and also decided to visit Port Arthur. We were just two carefree 21-year-olds having a great holiday, not thinking too far ahead into the future, not expecting to settle down for a long time, but fate stepped in. We met on 2 January 1961 in Port Arthur and 62 years later we are still together and will be together for always.

We married on 29 December 1962 and we were looking forward to celebrating our 60th wedding anniversary but Joel passed away just six days before our anniversary.

Our marriage was so happy. By the end of August 1966 we had three little daughters, Catherine, Elizabeth, and Alison who have been the shining light of our lives. Tragically, our beautiful Ali passed away in 2013.

In 1969 we began building our own home in Lower Templestowe and moved there in March 1970. We have a steeply sloping block which required many retaining walls and rockeries. Joel had not done any landscaping before but he attacked this task with his usual enthusiasm and thoroughness. His work still stands today, more than 50 years later, as solid and sturdy as the day it was built. He was a perfectionist in everything he did.

Meanwhile, Joel's teaching career was going ahead successfully and at the age of 37 he was appointed Principal of a secondary school - the youngest Principal in the state. He was always amused by the fact that other Principals referred to him as 'Young Joel'.

His first school as a Principal was in a very disadvantaged area of Melbourne. I remember him coming home from school one day telling me that a group of students had been taken on an excursion to the local lake. The teachers had a supply of stale bread to feed the ducks but they reported to Joel that some of the students had eaten the stale bread because there had not been any breakfast for them at home.

This was naturally of great concern to Joel, who saw the need for his students to have access to regular



meals and good quality food provided by the school canteen, but school canteens were struggling financially at the time and in danger of closing down. So Joel had the idea for several schools to combine to form a co-operative to improve their buying power. In 1979 a group of 16 schools joined together under Joel's leadership and it was a huge success from day one. Membership quickly grew until today, over 40 years later, there are over 6,500 member schools. It is now known as ASCA, the Australian Schools Canteen Association, and is a not-for-profit member association focusing on maximising the effectiveness and financial outcomes for schools. Surplus funds go to Australian charities, such as State Schools Relief, which support the education of vulnerable children. Over the years huge amounts of money have been donated. Joel has left a magnificent legacy to Victorian schools, school children and charities. In recognition of this, he was awarded the inaugural life membership of ASCA in 2019.

In the 1980's Joel was also responsible for developing a model for school resourcing that was to revolutionise how schools would be funded. This has over the years become known as the Student Resource Package - SRP - and is the model still used by all 1,600 Victorian government schools today. Joel's contribution and impact in the area of financial management in schools was transformational.

As well as his considerable workload as Principal of a secondary school, Joel was also engaged in community service. In the late 1970's he was invited to join the Lions Club, an organisation formed to assist less fortunate members of the community. He was a member for some years and served a term as President.

Joel suffered serious health problems in 1989 and at Easter that year he had major heart surgery - six bypasses. He improved dramatically after the operation and was soon back at work and as active as ever. However, by 1993 his health was once again causing problems and he retired from the Education Department in 1994.

Retirement was a happy time for us and the highlight of the 1990's was the birth of our three grandchildren, Rachel, Jessica and Luke, who are a constant joy to us.

In retirement we were still able to travel and enjoy our holidays. On one particular holiday we went to the Grampians in Victoria and it became our favourite holiday destination. When we finally acquired a Land Cruiser 4-wheel drive we were able to go off the beaten track and have more adventures, including on one occasion rolling the car several times on Roses Gap Road, ending up on our side and,

miraculously, walking out of the car through the windscreen with the only injury between us being a scratch on the finger. Of course, the car didn't fare quite so well.

During the 1980's we also made several trips to the outback and travelled up the legendary Birdsville Track. On two occasions we visited the Dig Tree of Burke and Wills fame. This was a particular thrill for Joel as one of his great interests has been the history of Australian exploration. We were also fortunate to visit the Outback after a rainy season and the sight of the Australian outback covered in flowers in glorious colour is one we will never forget.

Between 1986 and 2009 we had several overseas trips - to Europe, Great Britain, Ireland, USA, Canada, China, New Zealand, Turkey, Greece, and a Mediterranean cruise and a Rhine River cruise, but of all of the countries that we visited Germany was always Joel's favourite.

When Joel's father Andy was widowed in the 1980's and feeling quite lost, Joel bought a computer for himself and one for his father and together they learned about computers. He was able to combine his computer skills with one of his and his father's other passionate interests - genealogy. Many hours were spent on the computer researching the Blackburn family tree and over the years Joel added huge amounts of information and became the family expert on all things Blackburn.

He also began tracing my family history, the **Kruse** family, which then led to our discovery of my Wendish connections through the **Domaschensz** family from Werben near Cottbus in Lower Lusatia. We joined the Wendish Heritage Society Australia and served on the committee. Joel computerised many of the Society's records, involving countless hours of painstaking work, thus giving easier and speedier access to researchers studying their Wendish backgrounds.

In 2015 Joel became very ill and was not expected to survive, but he rallied and managed to have a good quality of life over the next few years and we were still able to do a little travel within Victoria. At the beginning of 2022, however, his health seriously deteriorated and he was hospitalised several times during the year. He passed away just two days before Christmas, leaving an overwhelming sadness and loss in our lives.

We thank Janice Blackburn for this Tribute. We extend our sympathy to Janice and family and to all who are grieving for Joel.



Sonja Fischer
Mobile: 0417 434 272
Email: info@ozgermantranslationservices.com.au
Website: www.ozgermantranslationservices.com.au

Professional NAATI Certified Translator since 1991

Certified Translation from German to English
Accredited Translation from English to German

Translations of official documents including birth certificates, marriage or death certificates, drivers' licenses, police checks, references and employment qualifications as well as personal documents, business documents, scientific, musical, medical or legal translations. Also available for editing and proofreading. Specialisation in old German Script.

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
Tel: 03 5572 4959 Email: bettyhuf@outlook.com

Vice-President and Computer and Website Consultant:
Mick Ampt, Mobile 0434 149 045
Email: mickampt@optusnet.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:

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

Margaret Gork: 76 Stirling Drive, Lake Gardens, Vic. 3355.
Email: jmgork@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

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

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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