



# wendish news

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

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*Decorated Easter Eggs for sale at the Sorbian Museum, Bautzen (see pages 4–6). PHOTO: ANNE MIRTSCHIN.*

## Join our March Tour

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our Tour to the Millicent, Mount Gambier and Penola areas of South Australia on 9–11 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

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

Our Tour Leader, Betty Huf, has graciously offered to lead us on a tour of the Millicent, Mount Gambier and Penola areas of South Australia, on 9–11 March, which is the Labour Day long weekend in Victoria and also a long weekend in South Australia.

We are hopeful that the Kappler plaque will be ready for unveiling that weekend, in the Lake Terrace Cemetery in Mount Gambier. Another highlight will be the retracing of part of the route taken by the 1852 Wendish wagon trek, from Millicent to Nelson. The itinerary will include time for participants to pursue their own particular interests (this worked well on the Bendigo tour last year).

Betty's proposed itinerary is as follows:

### **Saturday 9 March – Millicent**

**12 noon:** Meet at the Tourist Information Centre, 1 Mount Gambier Road, Millicent, South Australia

**12.30–1.30pm:** Lunch (BYO picnic or purchase at local business)

**1.30pm:** Meet at St Paul's Lutheran Church 10–12 Main St, Millicent. View the church and learn about the history of the congregations (St Paul's and Zion) and some of the local Germans.

**Free time with suggested options:**

- Living History Museum
- Ants Redgum Gallery
- Art Gallery
- Tantanoola Caves: single-chamber cave, wheelchair accessible
- Glencoe Woolshed: built in 1863, a museum of historic blade shearing and wool handling processes

**5.00pm:** Drive to Mount Gambier and check into accommodation

**7.00pm:** Dinner (at a place to be determined), possibly with a local guest speaker

### **Sunday 10 March – Mount Gambier**

Sunday morning worship service at St Martin's Lutheran Church.

Unveiling Ceremony for the Kappler plaque in the Cemetery (afternoon?).

**Other options for the afternoon:**

- Cemetery tour of German graves
- Visit to the site of the Boandik Church and Cemetery
- Half hour drive to Nelson to view the place where the Wends crossed the Glenelg River in 1852 on their way to Portland

- Free time to pursue own interests

**6.30 pm:** Dinner – venue to be advised.

### **Monday 11 March – Penola**

**9.30 am:** Drive to Penola

Meet at the John Riddoch Centre – tourist information and Local History

- Visit the Mary MacKillop Centre
- Free time to explore the Coonawarra Wine Region, shops etc.
- Perhaps final lunch together

*Please make your own arrangements for accommodation in Mount Gambier.*

*Please book by 28 February 2024 with Betty Huf.*

*Email: [bettyhuf@outlook.com](mailto:bettyhuf@outlook.com)*

*Tel: (03) 5572 4959 Mobile: 0439 724 959*

*More detailed information will be provided closer to the time, to those who book.*

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

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

Proxies will be accepted. Please appoint a proxy if you are unable to attend, to ensure that we have a quorum for this important meeting. Please see the proxy form enclosed in this Newsletter. Any member who is attending the meeting may be appointed as a proxy. Committee members may also be appointed as proxies eg. President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer or any of the Committee members listed in our Directory on page 12. Please post the proxy form to reach us by Friday 26 April.

Alternatively, you may email a message appointing a proxy to the address below. To appoint a proxy, please use the following wording:

**"I, ....., being a paid member of the Wendish Heritage Society Aust. Inc., am unable to attend the AGM to be held on Saturday 27 April 2024. I appoint..... as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the meeting."**

Please note that you must sign your message appointing a proxy. Please include an image of your signature.

*Contact: Glenys Wollermann (Secretary)*

*Tel: (03) 9891 6652*

*Email: [g.wollermann@y7mail.com](mailto:g.wollermann@y7mail.com)*

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

*Date to be advised.*



# Past Events

## Kotzur Reunion, 14–15 October 2023

*We thank Graeme Wenke for the following report:*

A weekend of family celebration and thanksgiving was held at Culcairn Bowling Club and Alma Park in New South Wales on 14–15 October 2023, where over 80 relatives of the Kotzur family met for a Reunion.

The Reunion was suggested by Ruth and Karen Kotzur, both of whom married fourth generation descendants of Martin Kotzur (1833–1916) and his wife Lisa, nee Towk (1834–1900). A committee was formed in January to plan a Reunion to commemorate 166 years of settlement in Australia.

On Saturday evening a banquet meal was held at the Culcairn Bowling Club, where guests dined and shared conversation and memories with relatives that many had not seen for a long time. Coloured banners representing each child of Martin and Lisa were displayed, and some took advantage of the opportunity to take a family photo near them. Those who correctly answered some trivia questions about Kotzurs were awarded prizes donated by Kotzur, the local engineering firm.

On Sunday a thanksgiving service was held at Salem Lutheran Church at Alma Park. This was led by Pastor Ian Kotzur and Pastor John Borchert. After the service a group photograph was taken in front of the church. A plentiful luncheon of steak sandwiches, sausages in bread, sandwiches, cakes and desserts in the Alma Park Hall was appreciated by all. The noise level of the conversations indicated the huge enjoyment of catching up with extended family. Tables of photos and memorabilia were assembled along a wall for people to browse some family history and go on a nostalgic journey.

When lunch was completed another photo session of family groups assembled in front of the old Alma Park schoolhouse, to claim the moment in time. In the late afternoon, a small party visited the Alma Park and Pleasant Hills cemeteries to see the graves of Martin and Lisa which actually are apart – Martin at Alma Park and Lisa at Pleasant Hills. Some flowers were laid on Lisa's grave by Alexandra Frew who is a Towk descendant. After all the celebrations, a beverage at Pleasant Hills Community Hotel was in order and we toasted "the Kotzurs!"

### About Martin and Lisa Kotzur

The Kotzur journey commenced in 1857 from a village named Jänschwalde in Lower Lusatia, 150 kms south-east of Berlin, when Martin Kotzur and his wife Lisa bid farewell to their homeland. They, like others, were seeking better opportunities to build a future for themselves and their family.



*Alexandra Frew laying flowers on the grave of Lisa Kotzur, nee Towk, Pleasant Hills Cemetery, NSW.*

PHOTO: GRAEME WENKE.

The Kotzurs arrived in Sydney from Bremen aboard the *Gottorp*, then travelled by steamship to Portland in Western Victoria. They settled with other Wends at Neukirch (Byaduk) near Hamilton. Five children were born at Byaduk: Marie, Johann, Christian, Anna and Bertha.

In 1868 they travelled overland, with other families, to Jindera in New South Wales. They farmed at Gerogery, where four more children were born: Friedrich, Martin, Ernst and Louise. The Kotzurs later farmed at Alma Park and finally at Pleasant Hills in New South Wales. They were true pioneers, clearing and developing land to use for agriculture in each of the places they lived.

Martin and Lisa were deeply religious. They were founding members of the Byaduk, Gerogery, Alma Park and Pleasant Hills Lutheran congregations. They were guided by their strong Christian faith which can still be observed in the descendants of this remarkable couple. The Kotzurs are trustworthy and kind people who are always willing to help their neighbours. Thanks to all descendants who made the journey and to those who helped behind the scenes to make this Reunion a great event.

GRAEME WENKE



## Past Events ...continued

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

Ballarat continues to be a convenient central location in Victoria for our Society's Annual Luncheon. The venue was the Barkly Motorlodge, Bakery Hill, Ballarat and its restaurant, which is now a Chinese restaurant, appropriately named the "Maple Palace". Thirty-two people attended. Large platters and bowls of delicious Chinese food were served to each table, for diners to help themselves. All were very pleased with the quality and quantity of the food provided.

Colourful posters depicting costumes, customs and scenery in Lusatia, Germany were on display and various family history books were for sale. The post-Luncheon talk and videos were presented by Guest Speakers Betty and Colin Huf. They informed the diners about their recent "Hochkirch and Homelands Tour, Easter 2023".

JOHN NOACK

*We sincerely thank Betty Huf for the following report:*

### Easter in Bautzen and Hochkirch, 7–9 April 2023

In 2020, Colin and Betty Huf organized a Tour for their extended family with the intention of visiting their ancestral villages and experiencing Easter in Bautzen and Hochkirch, Upper Lusatia. Due to the Covid pandemic, this Tour was postponed until 2023.

Our journey commenced in Hamburg, then progressed south through Schwerin, Berlin and Dresden before experiencing Easter in Lusatia. We then moved on to Poland where visits were made to Nekla and

Zielona Gora before returning to Germany to visit Wittenberg, then Oberammergau and Salzburg before ending our Tour as a group.

Thirteen of the fourteen members in the Tour group were descendants of the Mirtschin, Burger, Rentsch and Deutscher families who emigrated from the Hochkirch Parish. Group members were: Annette Hubbard; Bruce and Anne Mirtschin; Dawn Cook; Geoff and Wendy Habel and daughters Erin and Anna; Martin and Ruth Gellert; and Colin and Betty Huf and son Daniel.

Experiencing the Easter traditions of the Upper Lusatian Wends and Germans was the aim of our visit. The first sign that Easter was imminent was the Ostererbaum, the decorating of leafless trees with coloured plastic Easter eggs. We also saw examples of Osterbrunnen where public fountains and monuments were decorated with colourful eggs, together with garlands of evergreen foliage and potted annuals. Many spring flowers were also prevalent in window boxes and garden beds. Osterhase (Easter Rabbits) were also seen, particularly in the Bautzen area. Some were small ornamental garden figures, whilst others were human-sized creations made from straw.

The Sorbs in East Germany, and other Slavic people, are renowned for their beautiful art of egg decoration. Demonstrations of egg decorating were being conducted in both Tourist Information Centres in Bautzen. Whilst visiting the Matuschka ancestral village of Dissen, we accidentally stumbled across an egg decorating workshop, attended by people of all ages, in the local Museum. Participants were being taught the traditional method of using beeswax and feathers. The room was filled with a haze produced by the candles melting the wax to be used in the decorating process.



*Left: Daryl Deutscher thanking the Speakers at the Annual Luncheon. Right: Luncheon guests chatting while enjoying their meal.* PHOTOS: MICK AMPY.



1. Siblings Geoffrey Habel and Betty Huf in the former blacksmith shop of their ancestor, Peter Mirtschin, in Steindörfel. Anne Mirtschin at rear. 2. “Now *that* is a sausage!” Colin Huf at dinner in the Alter Bierhof Restaurant, Bautzen. 3. Trudla Malinkowa interviewing Betty Huf at St Michael’s Lutheran Church, Bautzen. PHOTO: COLIN HUF.

During our trip we visited Easter Markets at Lübbenau and Bautzen. Here local produce and crafts were being sold, including stalls selling decorated eggs featuring traditional patterns. It was possible to purchase decorated eggs at the tourist information centres as well as the Sorbian Museum in Bautzen, where the winning eggs of competitors in the Annual Egg Decorating Competition were on display.

Whilst travelling to Döhlen, the ancestral village of the Mirtschin descendants, we came across a group of men and their vehicles in a hilltop wooded area. They seemed to be having a barbeque and enjoying a beer, but as we passed them, a loud BOOM was heard, which startled us as we could see a flash of light in the trees. Upon our arrival at Döhlen, the booming continued and we were told that this was Osterschiessen (Easter Shooting), a custom practised only on Easter Saturday. This custom originated in the superstition that the evil ghosts, or witches, would be frightened away by the noise. Tins and rifles were used to make noise in the past, but today homemade carbide cannons, made from milk cans, are used instead. For centuries past this occurred in Upper and Lower Lusatia, but today it is confined mainly to the villages south of Bautzen. We

were puzzled when told that Easter Saturday in that area is known as ‘Silent Saturday’!

Another custom we hadn’t heard of before was Osterblasten. Literally this translates as ‘Easter Blowing’. On Easter Sunday morning, members of brass bands travel from village to village and play a selection of Easter hymns in each place. We were surprised by the arrival of brass players shortly after the completion of our Dawn service at Wuischke.

Visits were made to ancestral villages during our time in the Hochkirch area. Annette Hubbard was overjoyed to visit the Deutscher home at Zschorna. A friendly occupant of one of the buildings related information about the former mill, which was still operational until the 1970’s. One of the early mill stones was seen. In Steindörfel, a visit to the former home of Peter Mirtschin provided an emotional experience for the Mirtschin descendants who were able to view and touch some of the blacksmith equipment remaining in the building from the mid-1800s.

Kuppritz, the home of the Rentsch family, and Meschwitz, the village from which the Burger family emigrated, were also visited.



Over the Easter period we attended worship services numerous times: in the Berlin Cathedral on Palm Sunday; the Frauenkirche in Dresden on Maundy Thursday; a service conducted in the Wendish language at St Michael's, Bautzen on Good Friday; an Easter Sunday Dawn Service at Wuischke, near Hochkirch; followed by the Easter service at Hochkirch and finally in the Castle Church at Wittenberg the Sunday after Easter. It was a spiritually uplifting experience throughout the Easter week for all of us, even though we could not understand the German and Sorbian languages.

But the absolute pinnacle of our Easter experience was viewing the Easter Riders. This is a tradition of Catholic men, and not one that our ancestors would have participated in. Costumed horse riders move from village to village singing Resurrection hymns in Wendish to the locals and visitors as they pass through. It is a solemn procession, with only the men's singing and the clapping of the horses' hooves on the cobblestones being audible. There is no cheering or clapping, as great respect is shown by onlookers. Each village has its own specific set of hymns. There are five different groups of Riders, each with their own route which takes most of the day for them to complete. 1200 men participated in the ride in 2023. We were privileged to view two groups of Riders during the day and the experience will remain with us forever.

An article published about the visit of our group in the Sorbian newspaper *Serbske Nowiny* by author and historian, Trudla Malinkowa (Gertrud Mahling), raised some interest about the Australian Wendish visitors. Trudla interviewed Betty Huf, in her role

*Above Left: Domowina President, Dawid Statnik, and his son with the Easter Riders in Wittichenau.*

*Above Top: Pastor Thomas Haenchen showing Annette Hubbard the entry for her Deutscher ancestor in the Hochkirch Baptism Register (Dawn Cook, Geoffrey Habel and Bruce Mirtschin at rear).*

*Above Middle: Osterblasten (Easter brass music) at Wuischke by members of the Hochkirch Brass Band.*

*Above Bottom: Easter Dawn service at Wuischke.*

ABOVE THREE PHOTOS: FROM 'AUSTRALIENS IN LAUSITZ WULADKO', SORBIA TV.

as President of our Society, during the Good Friday service at St Michael's in Bautzen, which was led by Trudla's husband Jan Mahling, a Wendish speaking Pastor. A Sorbian TV crew also interviewed and filmed us on Easter Sunday which resulted in us all appearing in a segment on the Sorbian news program *Wublادko*. To watch the Sorbian TV segment, type the following into your search box in Google or Bing: *Awstralcenjo we Luzicy/Australier in der Lausitz*.

BETTY HUF



*Top Left: Tour Group in the Frauenkirche, Dresden, on Maundy Thursday.*

*Front row: Bruce and Anne Mirtschin, Dawn Cook, David Zweck, Martin and Ruth Gellert.*

*Back row: Annette Hubbard, Betty, Daniel and Colin Huf, Erin, Anna, Wendy and Geoffrey Habel.*

PHOTO: COLIN HUF.

*Bottom Left: Saying grace prior to Easter Sunday breakfast, Church Hall, Hochkirch.*

PHOTO: FROM 'AUSTRALIENS IN LAUSITZ WULADKO', SORBIAN TV.



practices, the interview moved on to the preservation of the Lutheran traditions amongst descendants, as most of the Wendish emigrants were pious Lutherans. After relating that the church had played an important role in Australia, it was noted that this tradition continues to this day, with almost all Committee members of both Wendish Societies in Australia being active in their local Lutheran parishes.

In reply to the question, *What does visiting your ancestors mean to you personally?* Betty replied,

*Walking the paths my ancestors walked on, and worshipping in the church they once attended, gives me a deep sense of connection with them. For me, ancestors are not just meaningless names from a family history book; they are real people who already knew some of the buildings that I can see today. I feel particularly close to them in the Hochkirch church. I may even be sitting in a pew where they once sat, or receiving communion from the cup they have already drunk from.*

The work of the Wendish Societies in Australia was also described: their membership, activities, successes and challenges.

Interestingly, an individual approached the Tour group in the Rosenthal cemetery after he recognized Colin Huf from photos in the newspaper article.

Betty was also briefly interviewed by Trudla Malinkowa after the Good Friday worship service led by her husband, Pastor Jan Mahling, in St Michael's Church, Bautzen. As the service was conducted in Wendish, and most of those present were not English speakers, Trudla translated into German the answers that Betty gave.

Milan Greulich, who works for the Sorbian TV program *Wubladko* also asked for an interview, and this occurred on Easter Sunday, with the segment being featured on Sorbian TV early in May. *See reference to the link in the article "Easter in Bautzen and Hochkirch".*

Although there were only fourteen members in the Australian group, the exposure that was given to them via the print media and television ensured that their presence in Upper Lusatia did not go unnoticed.

BETTY HUF

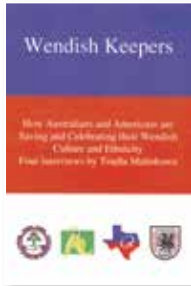
### **"I feel particularly close to my ancestors in the Hochkirch church"**

This was the headline used for the interview conducted by Trudla Malinkowa with our President, Betty Huf, which was published in Wendish in the newspaper *Serbske Nowiny* on 6 April 2023. Betty was asked about the group of descendants of Wends from Australia who spent several days visiting Lusatia during Easter 2023. She explained that the Tour had been planned because their ancestors came from the Hochkirch parish in Saxony, and it was their aim to experience Wendish Easter customs in Lusatia, as well as visiting the villages from which their forebears had emigrated.

Most were descendants of the Mirtschin family from Döhlen. One participant came from the Deutscher family from Zschorna. The Hufs, as well as being descendants of the Mirtschin family, were also connected to the Bürger family from Meschwitz and the Rentsch family from Kuppritz. After talking about the diminishing general knowledge that Australian Wends have of their ancestral language, customs and religious



# Books for Sale



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

Edited and produced by Weldon Mersiovsky

Copies are available for \$35.00, plus postage.

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



Rentsch family in Australia 1851–2020

Edited by Ruth Walter

Copies are available for \$70.00, plus postage.

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



Mirtschin families in Australia 1851–1990

Copies are available for \$10.00 plus postage.

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



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

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

Copies are available for \$2.00 plus postage.

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



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

Related surnames: Elix, Schenke, Reiss.

Copies are available for \$2.00 plus postage.

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





# General News



## Hay Bale Art Competition

Congratulations to Colin and Betty Huf for winning a category prize in the 2023 Hay Bale Art Competition for their “Christmas Glühwein” artwork.

The Hay Bale Art Competition began in 2010, instigated by Colin Huf. The decorated hay bales were placed at the entrances to Tarrington, Victoria to promote the town’s Laternenfest (Festival of Lanterns).

The Competition has grown to involve not only the residents of Tarrington but also those connected to the church and school who live outside of the town.

It took Colin and Betty three weeks to create their artwork. The bottle of German mulled wine was inspired by an item they saw in a tourist shop on their trip to Germany for Easter 2023.

The bottle was made from a long hay bale which had a shoulder extension constructed from a wire mesh

frame covered with straw and kept in place by bird netting. A local plumber provided a length of piping which had a ridge perfectly placed to form the neck of the bottle, from which a stream of wine flowed – bird netting stuffed with straw.

An old copper laundry tub standing on a shortened fence post was transformed to become the goblet.

The cheese platter components of olives, cherries and gherkins were created from bird netting and stockings stuffed with straw, whilst the cheese was shaped wire mesh filled with straw held in place by bird netting. Slices of wood cut from a tree trunk became the savoury biscuits.

The Hay Bale Art is generally displayed from early November to the end of December each year, along the Hamilton Highway, Tarrington.

PHOTO: COLIN HUF.



# Items from Other Societies' Journals

## Henry Charles Dalitz (1891–1972)

*The Dimboola & District Historical Society Inc. Newsletter (Oct. / Nov. 2022)* includes this obituary which was published in the local newspaper, *The Dimboola Banner*, in November 1972:

Mr Henry Charles Dalitz of Church St., Dimboola who died last Friday, was a son of Henry and Marie Dalitz. He was born at Pimpinio in 1891, later moving to the settlement at Wail. In 1916 he joined the 1st AIF and saw service in France. In 1920 he married Mabel Hirth and they farmed a soldier settlement block at Lil Lil where they farmed until 1947 when they moved to Dimboola. Mr Dalitz is survived by a son Alfred and daughters Lesley (Mrs M. McKenzie) and Betty (Mrs P. Ford).

## August Paul Gierke (1876–1948)

*The Dimboola & District Historical Society Inc. Newsletter (Feb. / Mar. 2023)* includes this obituary which was published in the local newspaper, *The Dimboola Banner*, in March 1948:

Mr August Paul Gierke, who died at Horsham on February 29, was born at Summerfield, South Australia. The son of the late Mr and Mrs John Frederick Gierke, his boyhood days were spent at Summerfield, but at the age of 17 years he entered Concordia College, then studied at Murtoa, to prepare himself for his chosen calling, that of church-school teacher. He graduated in 1898 and accepted an appointment to the newly-established school at Kirchheim, near Minyip, and there he carried out his life's chief work, for he continued as head teacher of this school till May 1936. For many years the Kirchheim school had a large enrolment of pupils, but in 1936 the number had dwindled to such an extent that it was decided to close it.

While acting as teacher at Kirchheim, the deceased conducted a Saturday morning school at Minyip, giving religious instruction to as many children as could attend. Eventually this became Sunday School, of which he was superintendent, assisted by two lady teachers, till last February. He was also secretary of St John's Lutheran Church Minyip for 47 years and organist for about 38 years. For 50 consecutive years he conducted a children's programme on Christmas Eve, a fact that was duly noted and recognized last Christmas.

After he had shifted into Minyip, he established a small business in bicycles, spare parts and repairs of a miscellaneous character, and in this respect as

in others, became the children's friend, especially in regard to their bicycles.

In the year 1901 the deceased married Marie Emilia Moller, of Dimboola who, however, died in 1912, leaving him with four young children, one only nine days old.

Though not of robust physique, the deceased enjoyed good health the greater part of his life. But recently a serious ailment overtook him, which eventually induced him to resign all his church offices, to close and sell his business, and to enter hospital in Horsham. There he passed away on February 29, at the age of 71 years and nine months. He is survived by his four children: Emil (Dimboola), Ernest (Rocklands construction staff), Nora (Minyip) and Emily (Mrs F. Wirth, Dimboola); also by two brothers and three sisters, resident of South Australia.

The funeral services were held at St John's Minyip on March 2nd and the interment took place at the Minyip Cemetery. Funeral arrangements were in the hands of Mr J. Brady, and the coffin-bearers were: Messrs. P. Huebner, H.A. Niewand, F.H. Rurade, F. W. Hotker, E. Janetzki, and E.A. Hausler. The services were conducted by Rev. Dr. J. Darsow.

## Emma Elizabeth Schuller (1880–1973)

*The Dimboola & District Historical Society Inc. Newsletter (Dec. 2022 / Jan. 2023)* includes this obituary which was published in the local newspaper, *The Dimboola Banner*, in January 1973:

Mrs Emma Elizabeth Schuller who died at the Dimboola District Hospital, aged 92 years, on December 27, was the third daughter of the late Wilhelm and Maria Tepper (nee Janetzki), pioneer settlers at Katyil in the late 1870's. She was born on October 17 1880 at Katyil, baptised at Kornheim and confirmed at Murtoa to where the family had moved. On April 6 1910 she was married to Gustav Adolph Schuller, who preceded her in 1965, as also did one son, Carl Berthold, who lost his life on active service in England in 1945. As the wife of a Lutheran day school teacher she also served as a teacher of sewing and craft for over 30 years at Palmer S.A. and Katyil. In 1942, with her husband, she retired to Riverside and in 1950 to her Hindmarsh St. home. She is survived by a sister (Miss Minna Tepper of Murtoa), a son Roy (Dimboola), five grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren. Rev. K. Nagel led the service at St Peter's Lutheran Church and at the graveside.



## “Walking Thomastown” Event

*The Friends of Westgarthtown Newsletter* (Oct. 2023) includes a report by Gordon Johnston on the highly successful “Walking Thomastown” event held from 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm on Saturday 2 September 2023. Over 2,000 people walked from Main Street Recreation Reserve, along Edgar’s Creek, to the Lutheran Church, Reserve and Ziebell’s Farmhouse.

The night was filled with performances, projections, art, live music, light installations and magic shows. Hundreds of people streamed through the Museum and Heritage Garden or sat on the front lawn and listened to musical performances.

The event was an outstanding success which continued to cement Westgarthtown and Ziebell’s Farmhouse Museum as relevant cultural assets for local and wider communities.

*Ziebell’s Farmhouse Museum and Heritage Garden is open on Sundays 10:30 am–3.00 pm and on Tuesdays 11.30 am–2.00 pm.*

*For enquiries, email [enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au](mailto:enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au)*

## Duldig Family History

*The Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia Inc. Newsletter* (March 2023) features a report on a talk given by Leona Coleman about her Duldig ancestors in Australia. Leona Coleman acknowledged the work of Dennis Gum who wrote the Schuppan family history book and Max Duldig who prepared the Duldig family website.

Johann and Anna Duldig were Wends who came from Tauer in Lower Lusatia, in the state of Brandenburg, Prussia. Johann and Anna and their son Friedrich emigrated on the ship *Helene* in 1855. On arrival in South Australia in January 1856, they stayed at Hope Valley for a month, before moving to Peters Hill. When the Peters Hill congregation was formed in July 1856, Johann Duldig was listed among the founding members.

At first they lived in a dugout, until a stone house was built near the church block. A further six children were born at Peters Hill, two of whom died in infancy. Johann and Anna’s daughters Anna Marie and Anna Caroline married into the Schober and Zerna families. Johann and Anna’s sons Friedrich and Gustav married Schuppan sisters, Louise and Caroline. The Schuppanns were also a Wendish family from Tauer.

Johann and Anna’s last child Heinrich did not marry.

Eldest child Friedrich Duldig bought land at World’s End and farmed there successfully for 46 years. Friedrich and Louise had fourteen children.

Over the years Johann purchased further property at Peters Hill which he farmed with his son Gustav. Gustav and Caroline Duldig had twelve children, four

of whom married into Wendish families: Hondow, Jenke and Marschall.

Johann died in 1912, at 86 years of age. Anna died in 1922, at 91 years of age. In summing up, Leona Coleman states that Johann and Anna Duldig adapted remarkably well to their new homeland, and that perhaps their confidence was fostered by living in the close-knit community of Peters Hill.

## Family History Research in the Central European Area

*The Queensland Family Historian: Journal of the Queensland Family History Society Inc.* (Feb. 2024) includes a notice that the Central European Group of the Queensland Family History Society aims to encourage, educate and assist members in their family history research in the Central European area. The Group meets online via Zoom (or in their new Family History Research Centre) on the first Saturday of even-numbered months from 10.00 am to noon. Convenors are Eric Kopittke and Noel Bergman.

*For further information, email Eric Kopittke at [kopittke@tpg.com.au](mailto:kopittke@tpg.com.au)*

*For details about research services available for members and non-members, see:*

*[www.qfhs.org.au/about-us/research-service](http://www.qfhs.org.au/about-us/research-service)*

## 2024 Sorbian Language Course Planned

*Texasko – Serbski Nowinkar: the Newsletter of the Texas Wendish Heritage Society* (Oct.–Dec. 2023) includes an article by Weldon Mersiovsky informing us of a two-week Sorbian language course to be held in July 2024. The following is from the website of the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, Germany <https://tinyurl.com/2024-sorbian-summer-course>:

**Date: July 12, 2024–July 27, 2024**

The international summer holiday course for Sorbian language and culture is aimed at Slavic students, students of Slavic studies from home and abroad and all interested Sorbian learners. The diverse program that the Sorbian Institute offers every two years consists of Upper Sorbian language exercises for beginners and advanced learners, lectures on the Sorbian language, literature, history and culture, conversations with Sorbian writers and artists, and visits to cultural institutions and excursions through Lusatia.

Weldon Mersiovsky states that the last time the class was held was in 2022 and beginners’ classes were held in English.



*Singing at the Easter Sunday Dawn Service at Wuischke.*

*L.to R.: Anne Mirtschin (partly obscured), Colin and Betty Huf (Daniel Huf partly obscured), Wendy, Geoffrey and Anna Habel.*

PHOTO: 'AUSTRALIENS IN LAUSITZ WULADKO', SORBIAN TV.

## 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.

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