



wendish news

WENDISH HERITAGE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

NUMBER 73 SEPTEMBER 2024



Officials holding the Lusatian flag at the Unveiling Ceremony for the Kappler Plaque, Lake Terrace Cemetery, Mount Gambier. L-R: Rob Wuchatsch (WHSA), Lyall Kupke (Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia), Sandy Cameron (St Martin's Lutheran Church, Mount Gambier) and Betty Huf. PHOTO: MICK AMPT

Invitation to our Annual Luncheon

You are warmly invited, along with family and friends, to attend our Annual Luncheon on Saturday 5 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.

CONTENTS

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS	2
PAST EVENTS	3
RESEARCH.....	10
GENERAL NEWS.....	11
VALE.....	12
DIRECTORY.....	12



Calendar of upcoming events

****Annual Luncheon****

Saturday 5 October 2024

Prior to our Luncheon there is the option for us to meet at 10.30am at Deutscher Outdoor Power Equipment, 731 Creswick Rd, Ballarat. Peter Deutscher will lead us on a tour of the engineering works.

Our Luncheon will start at 12.00pm for 12.30pm at Maple Palace (formerly Barkly restaurant) at Barkly Motorlodge, 43 Main Road, Bakery Hill, Ballarat.

All are welcome. Guest Speaker Peter Deutscher will give a PowerPoint presentation on the Deutscher companies which have produced engines, farming equipment, mowers, shredders and a range of healthcare products including medical beds and accessories.

The business began as the “Clyde Engineering Works and Foundry” in Hamilton, which was owned after 1904 by C.T. Deutscher. After it was sold in the early 1920s his son Heinrich (“Harry”) moved to Ballarat and continued to manufacture engines and farm equipment. This family has conducted business continuously in Ballarat since 1923.

Please book by Saturday 28 September 2024 by contacting Glenys Wollermann:

Tel: (03) 9891 6652 or 0481 150 994

Email: g.wollermann@y7mail.com

Bookings are essential.

Celebrating 100 years of the Walla Walla Zion Lutheran Church Building, 26–27 October 2024

Zion Lutheran congregation in Walla Walla, NSW is preparing to celebrate the centenary of the current church building on 26–27 October 2024.

The weekend activities will include displays of memorabilia, a Sunday church service and times of fellowship.

Organisers are currently collecting historical artefacts, memories and photographs to compile a historical record of the building and congregation over the last

100 years. The Walla Walla Historical Society Inc. is assisting by copying photographs and documents. The organisers are seeking copies of wedding, confirmation, youth, baptismal, Sunday School, Thanksgiving or Christmas nativity photos or other memorabilia that could be added to the collection.

All items scanned will be returned as soon as possible, or can be brought along in October. A special request is for photos taken during the actual building process. They have copies of the drawings of the building, but no photos.

If you do have items which could be scanned or lent for the celebration or if you have memories to share, please email:

John Borchert: john.borchert@lca.org.au

Tony Brinkmann: brinkade@bigpond.net.au, or

Janet Paech: email janetpaech@gmail.com

No Labour Day Weekend Tour in March 2025

Please note that there will be no March Tour next year. Instead you are warmly invited to participate in the program of events at Westgarthtown. See below.

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

A program of events to celebrate these significant milestones is being planned. Details will be provided when available.

Easter Tour in Lusatia, 11–27 April 2025

Following the success of their 2023 Tour, Betty and Colin Huf will lead another Tour to Lusatia. Thirteen participants will visit the ancestral villages of their Wendish forebears. They will spend Easter in Bautzen.

Lifelong Support for Care Leavers in Australia and New Zealand

CLAN (Care Leavers Australasia Network) offers lifelong support for care leavers in Australia and New Zealand. This group represents and supports people who were raised in Australian and New Zealand orphanages, children’s homes, missions and foster care. CLAN was started “by care leavers, for care leavers”.

Telephone: 1800 008 774 Address: PO Box 164, Georges Hall, NSW 2198

Email: support@clan.org.au Website: clan.org.au



Past Events



Tour members at Olivet Lutheran Church, Penola. Back L-R: Malcolm Zwar, Gilbert Materne, Jenny Gellatly, John & Ene Noack, Glenys Wollermann, Lyall & Lois Kupke, Colin Huf, Clay Kruger, Daniel Huf. Front L-R: Peter Winter, Julie Ballinger, Margaret Zwar, June Winter, Rob Wuchatsch, Sue Gravenall, Betty Huf.

PHOTO: MICK AMPT

Labour Day Weekend Tour, 9–11 March 2024

Our Tour to the Millicent, Mount Gambier and Penola areas of South Australia was led by Betty and Colin Huf. We are grateful for their meticulous planning of this event, which was attended by 21 people. It was a resounding success, despite the very hot weather! The unveiling of the Kappler plaque in Mount Gambier's Lake Terrace Cemetery was the Tour highlight. We thank John Noack for the following report.

Germans and Wends in South-Eastern South Australia

Our Society's Annual Tours in March have provided participants with the opportunity to visit areas where there were Wendish and German settlers. This year we explored three such settlements in the south-eastern region of South Australia: Millicent, Mount Gambier and Penola.

The Kappler Plaque at Mount Gambier

An important reason for visiting these towns was to acknowledge and to pay tribute to the impressive work of the Lutheran Wendish Pastor, Andreas Kappler, who in 1862 established St Martin's Lutheran Congregation in Mt Gambier. He died in 1877 and was

buried in Mount Gambier's Lake Terrace Cemetery. A highlight of this Tour was the unveiling on Sunday 10 March of the bronze plaque on Kappler's grave, acknowledging that he was the only Wendish Lutheran Pastor to emigrate to Australia.

Millicent's Valued History

On 9 March at 12 noon, the Tour members met at the Millicent Tourist Information Centre. The planned picnic lunch outdoors in the Park was quickly transferred indoors, in order to avoid the extremely oppressive heatwave. We were informed that the town of Millicent was named after Millicent Glenn, the wife of an early pioneer.

St Paul's and Zion Lutheran congregations.

During our visit to St Paul's Lutheran Church, 10-12 Main Street, Millicent, we were informed about the history of both the St Paul's and the Zion congregations, and also about the history of the local Germans and Wends. Land at Millicent was opened for selection in 1871. In 1874 Mount Gambier's Pastor Kappler also began conducting services for the settlers at Millicent. Services were conducted in the home and in a shed of the Wendish settler George Maroske, and later in the Exchange Hall.



Interior views of the Glencoe Woolshed. PHOTOS: MICK AMPT

The Living History Museum

Attached to the Information Centre is Millicent's remarkable "Living History Museum", which features an extensive range of displays. Apart from the restored wagons, carts, farming implements and a railway engine, there were also impressive displays of domestic utensils, musical instruments, telephone switchboards and typewriters.

A wide range of male and female clothing was presented in the "National Costume Collection", including items worn by Daisy Bates and Lady Bonython. The aboriginal artefacts, which were derived from the pre-European settlements, were displayed in a very respectful and informative manner. Many hours could have been spent observing all of these well preserved and carefully presented historical displays.

Tantanoola Cave

An interesting natural feature, which is located next to the road from Mount Gambier to Millicent, is the single-chamber Tantanoola Cave. The name Tantanoola is a Boandik Aboriginal word, meaning "woman's retreat". It was discovered by local boy Boyce Lane in 1930. Nowadays it has a large public entrance and has been made wheelchair accessible. The temperature in this cave is always about 17 degrees Celsius, a welcome contrast to the outside temperature which, on 9 March 2024, reached a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius. This cave features a spectacular array of stalactites, stalagmites and other limestone formations which have developed over thousands of years.

The Glencoe Woolshed

Participants were also able to visit the "Ants Redgum Gallery" in Millicent and the Glencoe Woolshed located east of Millicent. This Shearing Shed was built in 1863 and it is now "The Leake Brothers National Trust Woolshed", which displays the original and historic blade shearing and wool handling processes. The Leakes' station covered 53,000 acres and ran 50,000 sheep per annum.

Interesting People

The Saturday evening meal, which was held in St Martin's Lutheran Church Hall, was prepared and catered by the St Martin's Ladies. The meal was followed by presentations by Lyall Kupke, who informed us about the life of Pastor Andreas Kappler and by Betty Huf, who outlined the lives and contributions of various German and Wendish settlers in the Mount Gambier District.

The Boandik Lutheran Cemetery, Mount Gambier

On Sunday morning at 9 am, some of the Tour participants assembled at the current "Meischel Park" at 13 Warren Street, Mt Gambier. This Park was originally the site of the Boandik Lutheran church and cemetery, established in 1859 by Pastor C.W. Schürmann. Later Pastors were J.F. Meischel, J.E. Hansen and A. Stempel. After the closure of the church in 1907, the church and cemetery fell into disrepair and was turned into a park. A Memorial Plaque lists the 76 burials between 1864 and 1907.



Some of the headstones, which include such surnames as Lindner, Patzel, Polz and Ruwoldt, were salvaged and have been re-located to the property of St Martin's Lutheran Church in Mt Gambier.

The Unveiling Ceremony for the Kappler Plaque

At 1.30 pm on Sunday 10 March, our group and interested Mount Gambier folk assembled at the Lake Terrace Cemetery for the unveiling of the Plaque on the grave of Pastor Andreas Kappler.

Some background information was provided by Pastor Deane Meatheringam and by historian Betty Huf. Pastor Kappler left his Wendish homeland and his parish of Weissenberg in Lusatia, Saxony in 1848, in order to serve the pastoral needs of the Saxon and Prussian Wends and others, who had made Australia their new home. He spent much time and effort in locating Lutherans over a very wide area and he kept meticulous and detailed records of the hundreds of baptisms and marriages he conducted. *[These records were later translated into English by Dr Henry Proeve. Lutheran Archives gave our Society a bound copy of the translated records, to be used for research purposes. Thanks to the late Joel Blackburn, who digitized these translations, our Society now has a searchable database of Kappler's records.]*

In 1860, Kappler moved to Mount Gambier and served as the first Pastor at St Martin's Lutheran Church from 1860 until his death in 1877. Pastor Rechner, who conducted Kappler's funeral, stated that "Pastor Kappler was a very talented person, who was a warm friend and a faithful preacher." His tombstone states:

"In Memory of Andreas Kappler, Lutherischer Pastor an [at] der Martini Kirche in Mount Gambier. Geboren [Born] in Klein Hahnchen in Sachsen am 15th November 1802. Gestorben [Died] am 3rd Juni 1877. Sanft ruhe seine Asche. [His ashes are resting peacefully]"

It was felt that a new plaque was necessary to acknowledge that Pastor Kappler was Wendish, and to correct some details in the original inscription. Restoration work was also carried out on the headstone. The new plaque was jointly funded by our Society, the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia and St Martin's Lutheran Church, Mount Gambier. Representatives from each of these three groups spoke at the ceremony. Greetings were read from Dawid Statnik, Chairman of the Domowina in Saxony; Trudla Malinkowa, author of *Shores of Hope: Wends Go Overseas* (see page 6); and Peter Johnson, a great-great grandson of Andreas Kappler.



Andreas Kappler's grave, prior to the unveiling, including a wreath made with intertwined Linden and Gum tree leaves. Inset: Betty Huf making the wreath. PHOTOS: MICK AMPT



Greetings from Dawid Statnik:

Dear friends in distant Australia,

On behalf of the Domowina – Federation of Lusatian Sorbs – and as Chairman, I send you warm greetings. It fills me with pride to hear how you, as descendants of Sorbian and German emigrants, are preserving the traditions and heritage of your ancestors in Australia.

The Domowina was founded in 1912 and today, with almost 7,500 members, is the largest Sorbian umbrella organization and at the same time the political representation of the interests of one of the smallest Slavic peoples... We are proud of our connections to Australia. Our two member organizations are the Wendish Heritage Society Australia and the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia...

Descendants regularly visit the two Sorbian Museums in Bautzen or Cottbus. Last year I had the great honor of meeting an Australian delegation led by Betty and Colin Huf in Bautzen. It was exciting and moving for me at the same time. It is a great honor for us when someone maintains their Sorbian roots. I warmly greet Betty and Colin and hope to see you again soon...

Today you will visit the grave of Pastor Handrij Kapler. He was the only Sorbian priest to emigrate to Australia... John Noack presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Lutheran Archives in Victoria (FoLAV) in 2013 the article "Andreas Kappler, 1802–1877: An Independent Lutheran Pastor". I quote: "Pastor Andreas Kappler was the third ordained Lutheran Pastor to arrive in South Australia in the 1830s and 1840s. He did not arrive like Pastors Kavel and Fritzsche, with a prearranged congregation of "Old Lutherans" but he came with no congregation and he soon assumed the role of an Independent Lutheran Pastor. Kappler has been acknowledged as a Wendish Lutheran Pastor or at least as a Pastor for the emigrating Wends, who had arrived from both Upper or Saxon Lusatia and from Lower or Prussian Lusatia from 1848 onwards." ...

Dear friends, I wish you all the best. I am pleased that we are maintaining our connection and that we are cultivating our common history across continents. I cordially invite you to visit our beautiful Lusatia. ...With kind regards from Lusatia...

Dawid Statnik

Greetings from Trudla Malinkowa:

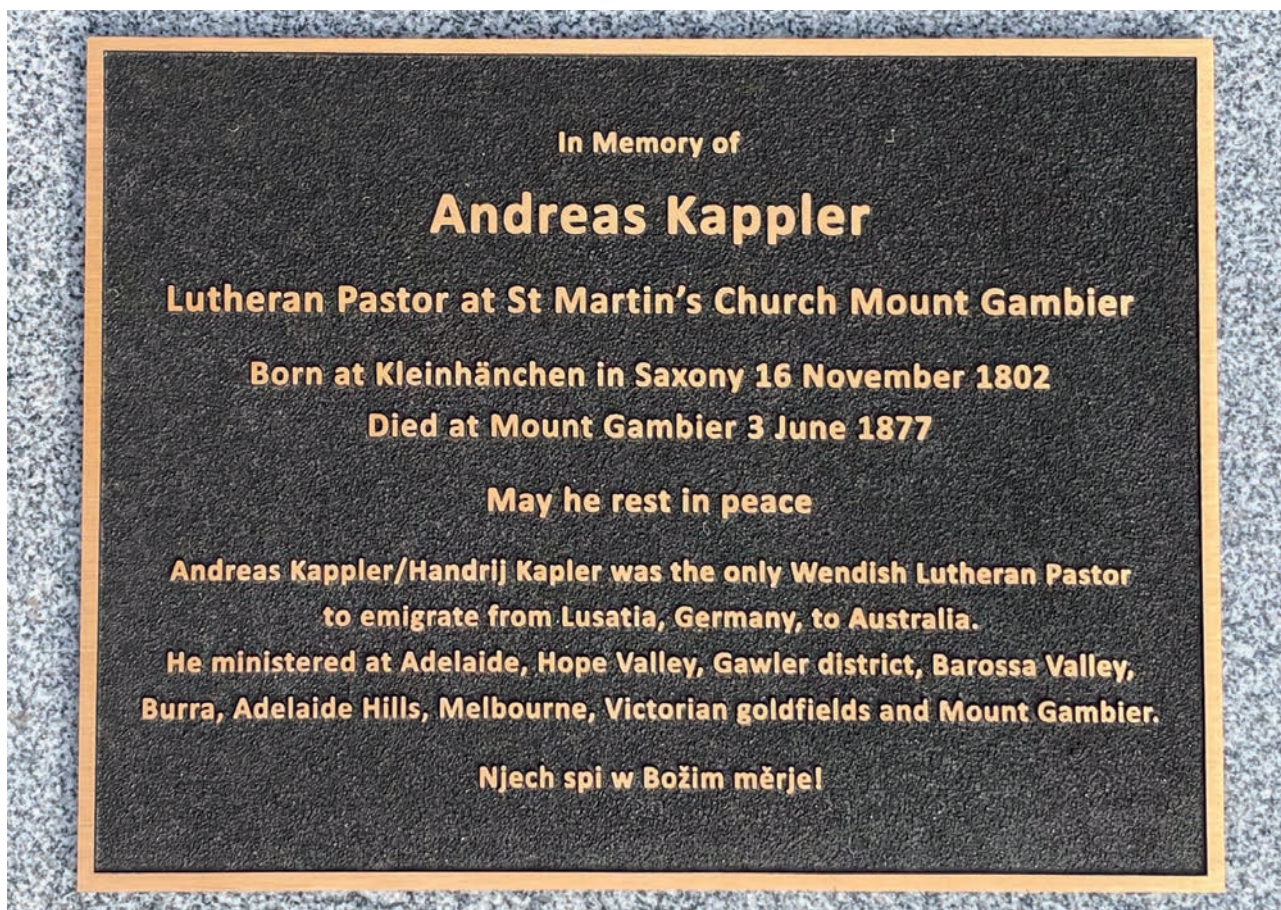
More than five years ago, in October and November 2018, I was able to visit the fifth continent as a guest of the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia and the Wendish Heritage Society Australia. One of the unforgettable impressions was my visit to Mount Gambier with Betty and Colin Huf. As an expert on the history of the Wends in Australia, Betty managed to find the sites of remembrance of Pastor Andreas Kappler. Together we visited St. Martin's Lutheran Church, where he had been the first pastor. In the entrance area of the church, a memorial plaque reminds us that he consecrated the church in 1862. His photograph is also exhibited here. A special highlight was the visit to his gravesite. I will never forget the moment when I stood at the grave of the Wendish compatriot, was able to look at his place of work and its surroundings from this high place and recall his fate.

Andreas Kappler did not have an easy life. He was born in 1802 as the son of a poor shoemaker in a small Sorbian village in Lusatia. With many hardships that required school education and university studies, he worked his way up to become a pastor in the small town of Weissenberg. "Unfortunate fate," as he put it, took him to Australia in 1848 at the age of 46. His wife and six children came with him. Life in the new homeland also brought with it many difficulties. Separated from his family and his Wendish compatriots, he wandered the country as a lonely fighter for several years until he finally found a place of rest when he was appointed pastor in Mount Gambier in 1861. There are certainly numerous descendants of his in Australia today.

The fact that Andreas Kappler is now being honored with a memorial plaque shows that he has not been forgotten almost 150 years after his death. His Wendish compatriots preserve the memory of the only Wendish pastor who ever immigrated to Australia. There is now also a blessing written on his grave in his Wendish native language: "Njech spi w Božim měrje!" (May he sleep in God's peace!) These are probably the only Wendish words in public on the Australian continent. We Wends in Lusatia are also pleased that this Wendish memorial was created in Australia and would like to thank everyone who contributed to it.

Trudla Malinkowa

(Translated from German to English by Google Translate)



The Kappler Plaque, which includes Kappler's correct birthdate. PHOTO: LYALL KUPKE

The Kappler Plaque

The inscription on the new plaque on Pastor Kappler's grave reads:

In memory of Andreas Kappler, Lutheran Pastor at St Martin's Church Mount Gambier. Born at Kleinhänchen in Saxony 16 November 1802. Died at Mount Gambier 3 June 1877. May he rest in peace.

Andreas Kappler / Handrij Kapler was the only Wendish Lutheran Pastor to emigrate from Lusatia, Germany, to Australia. He ministered at Adelaide, Hope Valley, Gawler district, Barossa Valley, Burra, Adelaide Hills, Melbourne, Victorian goldfields and Mount Gambier. Njeh spi w Božim měrje!

The blessing written in the Wendish language translates as "May he sleep in God's peace!"

Visit to the Glenelg River at Nelson

This is where a group of Wendish and German settlers from Rosenthal (Rosedale) crossed the Glenelg River in 1852 on their way to Portland. The journey, known as the "Wagon Trek", was slow and arduous. An 1852 diary provides detailed information about the Trek. From 1848 Henry Kellett operated a punt – a "flat bottomed shallow craft". It was on this punt that the early Wendish and German settlers crossed the Glenelg River. The punt continued to operate until the first bridge, made of stringybark timber, was built in 1893.

Evening Meal at the Jens Hotel

Hungry tourists in search of a meal are never disappointed by the tasty food served at the Jens Hotel at 40 Commercial Street East, Mount Gambier. This Hotel was built in 1884 by Johannes M. Jens, and operated by him until his death in 1915.

Destination Penola on Monday 11 March 2024

After the drive to Penola, the Tour party met at the John Riddoch Centre, 27 Arthur Street, which includes the Tourist Information and the Local History Centre. John Riddoch was influential in Penola, after settling in the area in 1861. He was a local Member of Parliament who, in 1890, subdivided 1,000 acres and sold this land to local persons, in order to establish the Penola Fruit Colony. In 1897, this area was renamed "Coonawarra".

The Mary MacKillop Centre

Mary MacKillop (1842–1909) had a long association with Penola. The local Scottish-born Alexander Cameron had been a pastoral pioneer who squatted on land in this area in 1845. However, in 1850, he formally and legally founded the town of Penola as a private township. Being Mary's Uncle through marriage to Mary's Aunt Margaret, he invited Mary MacKillop to his home in Penola, in order for her to be the governess of his children. Mary lived with the family as governess from 1860 to 1862.



She extended her role to educating other children and, while sharing her ideas with her local Catholic Priest and Scientist, Julian Tenison Woods, together they co-founded the religious teaching order, “The Sisters of St Joseph”, in 1866. We visited the Mary MacKillop Penola Centre, which includes a modern Interpretive Centre and the Woods-MacKillop Schoolhouse dating from 1867.

Olivet Lutheran Church Penola

The Olivet Lutheran Church is located on Robe Road in Penola. Olivet is in the Naracoorte Parish. Wendish descendant, Michael Matuschka, presented our group with plenty of information and stories about the history of Olivet Lutheran Church and its members.



The Wendish “Camawald Garden”

Our Tour’s final activity was a visit to the “Camawald Garden”, which Sue and John Zwar have spent 40 years creating.

The garden, which now occupies four hectares, is located at 170 Rocky Castle Road in Coonawarra. The name “Camawald” references the native River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and the word “wald”, German for “forest”. The garden features plenty of large shady trees, peaceful lilyponds, sweeping lawns, roses and other flowering perennials.

Unfortunately, new vineyards in the area are deemed to be more valuable than gardens, so the continuing existence of such natural environments in the future cannot be assured. The group appreciated the cool and refreshing drinks provided during this visit, in view of the heatwave which occurred during this weekend.

Grateful Participants

Members of the Tour are very grateful to the organisers, Betty and Colin Huf, for such a well-planned, interesting and informative Tour.

JOHN NOACK
PHOTOS: MICK AMPT, JOHN NOACK

Left: Michael Matuschka, Olivet Lutheran Church historian.

Below: Water lilies in the lake at Camawald. Inset: Ene Noack with hosts Sue and John Zwar.





Annual General Meeting, Saturday 27 April 2024

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

We had 16 people in attendance, 5 apologies and 32 proxies. President Betty Huf welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a special welcome to Carolyn Freeman from Sydney.

The following Office Bearers were re-elected: President Betty Huf, Vice President Mick Ampt, Secretary Glenys Wollermann, and Treasurer Rob Wuchatsch. Current Committee members indicated that they were willing to continue in their positions, except for retiring member Margaret Gork. Jenny Gellatly, Colin Huf, Clay Kruger, Beryl Nagorcka and Moira Nagorcka were re-elected as Committee members. In addition, we were very pleased to elect and welcome three new Committee members: Alexandra Frew, Catherine Gosling and Bronwyn Schier.



In her President's Report, Betty Huf gave a summary of activities undertaken since our last AGM. Our Committee held meetings on four occasions. Our Annual Luncheon was held at the Maple Palace Restaurant in Ballarat on 28 October 2023. Guest Speakers Betty and Colin Huf gave a presentation on the experience of Easter in Lusatia, including the highlight, the Easter Riders.

Our *Wendish News* continues to be acknowledged for the quality of its articles and production. We

welcomed five new members to our Society. Our Country Tour to S.A. on 9–11 March 2024, attended by 21 people, was appreciated by all. The highlight of the Tour occurred on Sunday 10 March with the unveiling of a plaque on the grave of Pastor Andreas Kappler, the only Wendish Pastor to emigrate to Australia. This was a joint project involving three groups: our Society, the Wend/Sorb Society of S.A. and St Martin's Lutheran congregation, Mount Gambier (Kappler's congregation). Betty gave special thanks to Rob Wuchatsch, Colin Huf (WHSA), Lyall Kupke (WSSSA) and Sandy Cameron (St Martin's) who worked together to complete this project. Thanks to Trudla Malinkowa, a photo of the unveiling appeared in Germany three days later, on the front page of the newspaper *Serbske Nowiny*.

Another project, the compilation of a complete list of Wendish immigrants, is ongoing. Betty thanked retiring Committee member, Margaret Gork, for creating the initial database. Margaret was also thanked for her assistance in organizing our Annual Luncheons.

Due to the considerable interest shown in the Hochkirch Easter and Homelands Tour of 2023, Betty and Colin Huf have offered to lead another Tour to experience Easter in Lusatia in 2025.

Betty concluded by thanking the Committee and all members for their support. She specifically acknowledged the work of Secretary/Newsletter Editor Glenys Wollermann, the Treasurer Rob Wuchatsch and his Assistant Clay Kruger. Betty signed off with a Wendish blessing *Bóh budź z tobu, doniž so zaso njewidźimy* (God be with you till we meet again!)

Treasurer Rob Wuchatsch presented the Annual Financial Statement for 2023. He reported that we had a good year. The total credit monies held in accounts as at 31 December 2023 was \$32,111.92. This was an increase of \$2,098.29 since 1 January 2023. It was decided that there will be no increase in membership fees for the coming year. The proposed Budget for 2024, based on the 2023 Budget, was accepted.

Please note: Membership invoices for 2025 are enclosed with this Newsletter.



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 names are donors from 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2024:

M. E. Adams, R. Albert, G. Allen, J. Ballinger, L. Bennett, R. Bransdon-Parkes, D. Brown, J. & J. Burger, P. A. Burger, S. Burke, C. Comas, M. Dalziel, B. Davies, D. Deutscher, P. Eagles, D. Edmund, G. Escreet, C. Freeman, A. Frew, C. Green, H. Handreck, N. & A. Hattwich, E. Hayden, S. Hayward, J. & A. Hoffmann, R. E. Huf, P. Jenke, J. & A. Keller, S. Kemfert, E. & G. Koch, M. & R. Kramer, A. Lueders, L. Maggs, M. Matuschka, Y. Mibus, R. & R. Mickan, N. Miller, B. & M. Nagorcka, J. Pearce, J. Petschel, B. Proposch, P. A. Richardson, M. K. Robson, G. Saegenschnitter, N. Salzke, J. Scheetz, M. C. & R. M. Scheetz, B. Schier, J. Schilg, G. Uebergang, B. Van Elst, V. Wehner, J. Williams, P. & J. Winter.



Research

The Schmidt Sewing Box – a Token of Brotherly Love

We thank Mary Ann Callinan (nee Nagorcka) for the following article:

Michael Schmidt (1800) and his sister Agnes (1808) were born in the town of Hochkirch, Saxony to parents Andreas Schmidt and his wife Maria (nee Lorenz).

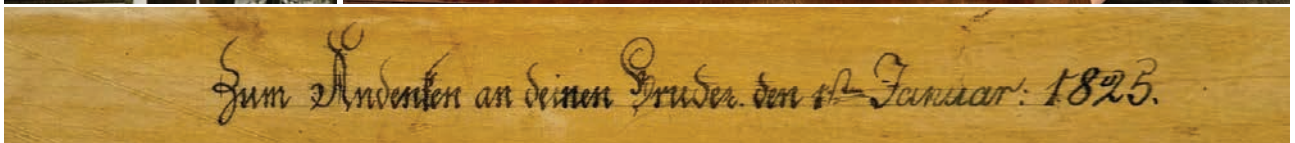
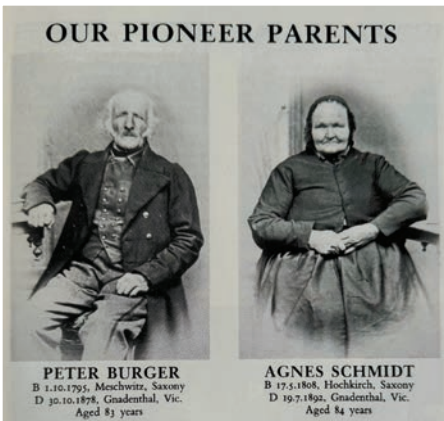
An intricately in-laid wooden sewing box was given by Michael to his sister Agnes in January 1825, when she was 17 years of age (see inscription on base of box). We believe it was at this time that Michael left his home in Saxony to travel to South Africa. After some time, he returned to Hochkirch.

Subsequently, on 4th September 1851, Michael, together with Agnes, her husband Peter Burger and their three children left on the ship *Helene* from Cuxhaven, near Hamburg, to emigrate to South Australia. There was some confusion at the time of

leaving with their sea-chests and baggage, which no doubt contained the sewing box!

They were joined on the ship by a number of other Wendish families. Of the 128 migrants on board, there were 92 Wends. They arrived in Port Adelaide on 24th December 1851. After four frustrating months attempting to establish a foothold on the outskirts of Adelaide; on 26th April 1852 Michael set off with the Burger family and one horse-drawn wagon on the “Wagon Trek” to Portland, in search of the land they had been told could be purchased there. They travelled with a number of other families including: Albert, Deutscher, Huf, Hundrack, Petschel and Rentsch. The Mirtschin family travelled by boat from Adelaide with furniture, chests (and sewing boxes), tools etc. and waited to be rejoined by the overlanders in Portland. The overlanders arrived after four very arduous weeks.

In 1853 the Burger family purchased land and settled close to Mt Rouse near Hamilton, an area they called Gnadenthal. Michael also purchased property adjoining the Burger allotment. They remained there, working the land, for the rest of their lives. Michael,



Clockwise from top left: Michael Schmidt; Peter and Agnes Burger; Mary Ann Callinan with the treasured Sewing Box; inscription on base of Box; Stanley Nagorcka with his apprentice piece grandfather clock.



who remained a bachelor, died on 4th September 1876 aged 76 years, with Agnes passing away on 19th July 1892 aged 84 years. Michael is buried next to Agnes and her husband Peter in the Gnadenthal Cemetery.

The sewing box has had a long journey – from Hochkirch in Saxony, to Adelaide, Portland and then on to Gnadenthal. After Agnes’s passing, the box was handed down to her grand-daughter Maria Matuschka (nee Burger). She passed it on to her daughter Helene Nagorcka (nee Matuschka), who in turn passed it on to her son Stanley Nagorcka – Michael’s great-great-nephew.

It was my father, Stanley Alfred Nagorcka, a very skilled cabinet-maker, who had the ability to complete the intricate repair work necessary to allow the beautiful box to remain a much-treasured part of our family heritage.

Whilst we are confident, we cannot be absolutely certain that Michael Schmidt made the box himself. It is inscribed with the German words *“Zum Andenken an deinen Bruder den 1st Januar: 1825”* which, translated, reads: *“In memory of your brother 1st January 1825.”* This implies that it was his work.

Additionally, the note on the back of Michael’s photo, probably written by Flora Matuschka (daughter of Maria Burger) states: *“This is the one that made the box that was given to Stan”*. The box is 37cm wide x 22cm deep x 16cm high.

Back in Saxony, many men had a trade to supplement their meagre income from farming, and also to occupy their time spent indoors over long periods during the harsh winters. Such trades included weaving, tailoring and cabinet-making (Peter Burger was a tailor). It is recounted that Michael carried out significant carpentry work on the Burger home at Gnadenthal.

Remarkably, next year the box will be 200 years old!

MARY ANN CALLINAN (NEE NAGORCKA)
PHOTOS: JOHN CALLINAN

Commemorative \$10 Note

In 1988, a special Commemorative polymer \$10 note was issued to celebrate the Bicentenary. The note was the first polymer (plastic) banknote of its kind in the world. The theme of the design is “settlement”.

One side of the note features works of Aboriginal artists. The other side shows the First Fleet sailing ship *Supply* and a line of people against a background of Sydney Cove. The people range from the early settlers on the left to the modern day people on the right.

A close inspection of the early settlers reveals a Wendish lady with a butter churn!

PHOTOS: MICK AMPT



General News



92nd Birthday Greetings to Clay Kruger

Treasurer, Clay Kruger, who celebrated his 92nd birthday on 23 July 2023. Clay’s family arranged a special birthday lunch for him at the Mornington Racecourse. We are very grateful to Clay for his many years of loyal service.



80th Birthday Greetings to John Noack

Congratulations to the founder of our Society, John Noack, who celebrated his 80th birthday on 16 May 2024. John celebrated this milestone with his family and relatives at the Austrian Club in Heidelberg West, Vic.



Vale

Stephen Hoffmann

Stephen Hoffmann passed away on 15 April 2024. His funeral service was held on 26 April 2024 at St Stephen's Lutheran Church, Adelaide. Our condolences to his wife Kay Hoffmann, his family and friends.

Gotzky Headstone

A tribute to Beverley Gotzky, written by Trudla Malinkowa, was published in the September 2023 edition of Wendish News. Beverley was a descendant of the two Sorbian emigrants Andreas Albert from Rachlau at Czorneboh and Agneta Heinze from Brießnitz near Gröditz. As young adults, they left Lusatia together in 1848 and married in Australia. At Gnadenthal in the state of Victoria they established a farm and raised a family of ten children.



Gotzky headstone at Springvale Botanical Cemetery in Melbourne, Vic. PHOTO: MICK AMPT

Directory

Aims: The Wendish Heritage Society Australia Inc., researches and promotes the Wendish/Sorbian and Germanic heritage and family history in Australia.

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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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