

Our Wendish costumes

The Wend/Sorb Society of SA holds a number of costumes that were donated to our society in 1989. This came about after an exhibition at the Migration Museum in Adelaide in that year. In preparing for the exhibition Paul Noack and Bev Hall, enthusiastic office bearers of the forerunner to the Wend/Sorb Society in SA, contacted the GDR Embassy for any materials, posters, books etc. for the exhibition.

Bev Hall explained in a recent email that "we were pleasantly surprised when they said they could also offer two costumes which had been sitting in the basement for several years. They thought they were Sorb, but weren't completely sure. When they arrived we found that they were Sorb and this really made our exhibition so much better."

The costumes our Society proudly holds are a wedding costume, a dance costume and a number of heavy woollen underskirts. They come from the Hoyerswerda district of Middle Lusatia. Several years ago we purchased a model (called Anna) to enable us to display them at selected functions.



Our Wendish dancing costume, worn by Marlen Glaschker in 2001

There is a lot to learn about assembling the costumes as traditionally many pins are used to hold all the ribbons and laces in place. Our president Lyall Kupke can confirm this: on a recent visit to Lusatia he was informed this is still the practice.

The costumes are referred to in this book in our Wendish library, which is held at the Lutheran Archives, Adelaide - Lotar Balke & Albrecht Lange, *Sorbisches Trachtenbuch*, Domowina Verlag, 1985.

The book is written in German and contains many photographs of various Wendish costumes from different districts, including the wedding dress costume and the folk dancing costume that our Society holds.

A German friend of mine, Helga Linnert, recently read the book and gave me a translation of the relevant information about our costumes from Hoyerswerda.

"There are many varied **wedding costumes**; these have a pleated green woollen skirt with a richly embroidered apron, a frilled top with green sleeves decorated on the bodice with the 'bride net' of green silk threads and silver glass pearls. The head covering consists of a black cone-shaped velvet hat open at the top. Braided plaits are put up into a so-called "little wheel" and decorated with green ribbons whose ends hang down the back. Green, black and white ribbons complete the costume.



"There are many varied **dance costumes** – small details like hats, scarves, aprons, shoes, stockings, ribbons, colours etc. change according to festivities such as religious ceremonies, carnivals, dances, engagements and weddings.

"**Colours** have meanings: Red is the symbol of youth and joy; Green is the symbol of seriousness of life; Black is the symbol of special celebrations."

It is a privilege to have these costumes in our care and to learn more about them.

Ruth Walter