



Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia Inc.

Newsletter

No.53

March 2017

At EXPO 2016

Our Wend/Sorb Society took part in the Australian history & genealogy EXPO in Adelaide on 7-8 October 2016. Arranged by the organisation, *Unlock the Past – Gould Genealogy*, it was the first national expo to be held in Australia. It was held in the Immanuel College sports centre.

Over 500 people attended on each day; some came from interstate. Around 100 different organisations had exhibits and there were expert speakers to listen to.

We had a stall to exhibit our society. We had brochures and newsletters to hand to interested people, and books for sale. Some of our library books were on the table for people to look through. We also had our new banner on display and our model Anna showed off her dancing dress. A number of our committee members took turns at being on hand to talk to people.



Brian Hennig admires our Anna



Leona Coleman, Pauline Burger & Ruth Walter

Some people were intrigued by the names Wend and Sorb and enquired about them. But the most frequent request was from people wanting to know if their family names were Wendish or not. We had a sheet with Wendish surnames on it, and the list from Nielsen's book to refer to. We were pleased to assist quite a few people and also gain some new members for our society.



Brian Hennig and Lyall Kupke

President's AGM Report

(given on 28 Aug 2016)

Our annual bus trip was a special one this year, as it was the final one that Eric and Ruth Fiebig organised. We visited some lesser-known places like Concordia (near Gawler), the Habermann family cemetery at Bethany, Graetz Town (near Keyneton) and got close to Towitta, the site of the Schippan murder mystery. The Murder Mystery Tour was enjoyed by all, and we thank Eric and Ruth for their thorough organising of our tours over the last 8 years.

Bus trips have been a special feature of our Wend Society program for many years and have been extremely popular. Can we continue to provide them? We need an organiser or a group of organisers to take this on. We don't have anyone yet. If you would like the challenge, please let the committee know. [Ed. See bus trip booking form]

At our June meeting I gave an illustrated talk on the trip that my wife Lois and I made to both Upper and Lower Lusatia last year. Our pictures showed numerous villages, churches, museums, harvest festivals and a punt trip along the canals of the Spreewald.

At Bautzen we visited the Sorb Institute and met Gertrud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa), the author of the book, *Shores of Hope*. We encouraged her to visit Australia and we assured her that many people would be interested to meet her and show her around the Wendish sites here. We also gave the Sorb Institute a number of books about Wends and Germans in Australia for their library. Also at Bautzen we collected a number of DVDs from Toni Bruk at the Sorabia Film Studio for showing in Australia.

At a harvest festival we were excited to see a dancing group from a village near Hoyerswerda in Middle Lusatia. The women were wearing the same dancing costume that our society owns. As well they displayed the wedding costume which we also have. These costumes were featured in our March newsletter this year.

On Saturday 9th July a number of our members came together for a luncheon at the German Club. If the volume of the conversation is any measure, it was thoroughly enjoyed by all. In fact, one member asked if these social gatherings could be organised 4 times a year. What do you think? [Ed. See page 6]

We are looking forward to taking part in the first Australian History & Genealogy Expo on 7-8 October at Immanuel College this year. The organisers have been overwhelmed by the large amount of interest shown by societies like ours and by family historians (genealogists) from all over Australia. It promises to be an exciting two days as we tell people about our Wendish heritage and maybe help others find their Wendish roots.

We continue to use our newsletter to advertise our meetings and inform about Wendish history and culture. Please send us any interesting articles you write or find so that we can publish them. Thanks to those who contributed this year: Barbara Day, Andrew Kollosche, Rona McDonnell and Ruth Walter.

We did investigate the idea of printing the newsletter in colour, but rejected the idea due to the additional cost. However, we could email the newsletter to members who asked for it and it would then be in colour. Is there any interest? It would also save on printing and postage costs.

Our Honour Roll of Australian Wends in the Great War has created much interest. Thanks to the many people who submitted names and details. We will continue to publish any further names that are submitted.

Unfortunately there has been little progress on the booklet about the Wends in South Australia this year. We will make a huge effort next year to complete this.

As reported at last year's AGM we decided at this stage not to join with the Wendish Heritage Society in Victoria in the updating of their website. It is now running and we encourage you to visit it (www.wendishheritage.org.au).

Finally, my thanks go to the hard-working committee. On behalf of all our members I thank all committee members for the time and effort you give to our society.

Lyall Kupke

Coming Events

Sat 11th – Mon 13th March Wendish Heritage Society's Weekend Tour

At Portland on Victoria's south-west coast. Tour leader is Betty Huf.

Check the Wendish Heritage Society website for the program: www.wendishheritage.org.au

Please make your own accommodation arrangements.

Please book by 28 February with Betty Huf: tel. (03) 5572 4959, email bettyhuf@westvic.com.au

Sat 29th April Bus trip: Historic Strathalbyn

Details on the booking form with this newsletter. ***BOOK EARLY***

Thurs 4th May, 11 am Talk: The Mystery of the Lost Language – the Wendish language in South Australia Speaker: Dr Peter Mickan.

At City of Burnside Library in the Burnside Civic Centre, 401 Greenhill Rd, Tasmore.

This is one of the events of the *SA History Festival* in May.

See the 2017 program (www.historyfestival.sa.gov.au) for booking details. Bookings (in April) are essential.

Sun 9th July, 2 pm Talk: The Lusatian Lake District (Das Lausitzer Seenland)

Speakers: Keith and Jan Lokan.

Keith and Jan will talk about the reclamation of the open cut brown coal mines in Middle Lusatia, transforming them into a large chain of interconnected lakes and creating an enhanced holiday region.

At St Andrew's Lutheran Church Hall (22 Avenue Rd, Glynde). All welcome.

Sun 27th August, 2pm Annual General Meeting

At St Andrew's Lutheran Church Hall (22 Avenue Rd, Glynde). All welcome.

From the President

The Victorian Wendish long weekend in March is on again this year. As Portland is just over the border from Mt Gambier, it will be easy for us South Aussies to get to and they invite us to join them. Note that you need to book with Betty Huf (details above). Portland is an historic settlement and the port for many of those Wends arriving on their way to the Western Districts of Victoria. You need to find your own accommodation. And watch your speed along the highway – 100 kph in Victoria! They have hidden speed cameras and they like catching careless SA drivers.

Our Bus Trip to historic Strathalbyn on Saturday 29th April will be organised by Malcolm Twartz, a longtime resident of Strathalbyn. It's guaranteed to be popular, so make sure you book your seats early. Check the booking form enclosed. Note that our starting point is at the usual spot in South Tce.

In May, as part of the SA History month festival, Peter Mickan will be talking about the fate of the Wendish language in SA. This will be held at the Burnside Library and you will need to book with the library. Details will be in the History Festival program booklet (or on the website) in April. We will be playing part of a film to give you the sound of the Wendish language spoken by our ancestors.

At our meeting on 9th July Keith and Jan Lokan will be sharing their experiences from their latest visit to Lusatia. It is always interesting to hear from different people who visited the homeland. Expect to hear some new insights.

We welcome Barbara Day and Jurgen Lehmann as new committee members. There are still some vacant positions on the committee. Do you know of anyone who would be willing to join?

Lyall Kupke

Peters Hill Cremonument dedicated

On Sunday 6th November 2016 the Friends of Peters Hill Church Inc. held their Annual Church Service, shared lunch and Annual General Meeting.

After the 11 am service Pastor Leon Rosenberg led the congregation to the adjoining cemetery and officially dedicated the recently completed Cremonument, which is a monument with spaces for placing cremation urns.



Pastor Leon Rosenberg dedicates the cremonument

This project, the latest by the Friends of Peters Hill Church Committee of Management, had been in the planning stage for some time. Norm and Ruth Schmidtke spent considerable hours touring cemeteries for ideas on designs.

Norm finally put pen to paper and came up with a plan which incorporated the Wendish Star and Circle. This motif had been adopted by the early Wendish settlers, often being painted on the church ceiling or suspended from it. The Peters Hill Church built in 1864 incorporated this motif in the window vents.

The star represents Divine Guidance and the circle The Everlasting Light.

Pearse Monumental Masons of Clare constructed and erected the Cremonument made of black and grey polished granite with placement for 16 interments.



Star and circle motif on the cremonument



Star in the church window vent

The Friends of Peters Hill Church are a vibrant and progressive community who are always working to improve and upgrade the church, cemetery and old school location. It is part of the Wendish Heritage Trail, and one of the principal Wendish locations in South Australia.

Our Wendish forefathers who gathered and settled at this location from 1856 would be proud of what has been achieved at Peters Hill over the last few decades.

Brian L. Hennig

Australian Wends in the Great War



As Australia commemorates the sacrifices made during World War I, our Wend/Sorb Society is interested in identifying those Australians of Wendish descent who fought and/or died for this country. When the Wendish ancestry comes from the mother, we record her maiden name. Unless otherwise stated they served on the Western Front.

We continue (from the last two newsletters) the record of the Wends who served:

DUSCHKE, Louis Otto, from Gidginbung, NSW (formerly from Horsham district, V); 4th Battalion; Killed in action, 23 August 1918, aged 23, buried Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres, France.

DUSCHKE, William Arthur Oliver, from Moutajup, V; 6th Battalion; Died of pneumonia 15 Feb 1919, aged 19, buried Charleroi Communal Cemetery, France.

SCHIMENTZ, Frederick William, (grandmother's maiden name was DREKO (DRECKOW)), from Lyndoch SA; 50th Battalion; Died of wounds 8 June 1917, aged 18 (or 23), buried Trois Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck, France.

We will add to this list in the next newsletters as new names come in. If you have other names to submit, please contact the Editor (see contact details on back page).

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to the family and friends of these members who died recently:

Nancy Wenke, the widow of Pastor Vic Wenke and the mother of Stephen.

Richard Glastonbury, husband of Ingrid.

ELECTIONS:

The following office-bearers were elected at the AGM (28 Aug 2016):

President: Lyall Kupke

Vice-President: Eric Fiebig

Secretary: Pauline Burger

Assistant Secretary: Ruth Walter

Treasurer: Leona Coleman

Extra committee members: Marie Brazier, Barbara Day, Ruth Fiebig, Brian Hennig, Jurgen Lehmann, Louine Tay. [However, Louine has since resigned due to family reasons.]



Modra wins bronze

Kieran Modra won his 10th Paralympic medal at the Rio Paralympic Games last September.

As a vision-impaired athlete he has competed at eight Paralympic Games since 1988, and has won an amazing five gold and five bronze medals. He also won two silver medals at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

Kieran Modra and David Edwards celebrate [Photo: Port Lincoln Times]

At Rio he won bronze in the Men's Road Time Trial B, riding tandem with his sighted pilot David Edwards. They averaged 50 kph over 30 km to clinch the bronze medal.

Kieran is the son of our members, Theo and Sylvia Modra of Port Lincoln.

Kieran first won bronze in swimming in 1992, but he then switched to cycling, where he has dominated ever since. Now aged 44 years he is uncertain whether he will contest another Paralympic Games. Congratulations to our champion!

Lunch at the German Club

Last year we took up the suggestion to arrange occasions where members could mix socially over a nice meal. So on two Saturdays, in July and November, a small number of members met for lunch at the German Club. If the amount of conversation is any measure, we have to say that the gatherings were very successful.

We have arranged for another on 18th February, but this may be after you receive this newsletter. We have emailed members in South Australia in advance to invite members where we have known their email address. Please make sure you include your email address on the subscription renewal form so that we can get in touch with you at short notice if necessary.

We will arrange another lunch later in the year and advertise it in the next newsletter as well.

Shall we email your Newsletter ?

There are now two different ways to receive your newsletter: by regular post, or by email.

There are some advantages in getting it by email.

- 1) You will get it sooner – as soon as it is ready for printing, well before it is posted.
- 2) You will also get it in colour. Colour printing costs too much, so it will only be printed in black and white. But by email you will get the pictures in colour.
- 3) The Society saves money if it doesn't print and post so many copies and that means we don't need to increase subscriptions, even though postage rates have increased greatly.

If you wish to receive it by email in future, please indicate on the subscription renewal form that is with this newsletter.

However, if you have already paid up for the year, email me your request now.

Sorbian Proverbs

If you want to clean another's ears, make sure your own are clean.

He who speaks the truth gets hit in the mouth.

He who can satisfy everyone is yet to be born.

My visit to Lusatia

In September-October 2016 my wife Lois and I took a trip to Europe and spent one week in Upper and Lower Lusatia.

In Bautzen we visited the Sorb Museum (Serbski Muzej) with its wonderful collection of items about Sorb (Wendish) history, culture and way of life. An English audio guide was useful in understanding everything on display. A large collection of models illustrated the different costumes worn in the different regions.

At the Sorbisches Restaurant Wjelbik we tasted a delicious meal of Sorb dishes.

On our visit to the Sorb Institute we met Gertud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa), the author of the book *Shores of Hope* about Wendish migration to Australia and America. She explained her project of recording Sorb monuments and Wendish matters. We invited her to come to Australia one day to see what happened to the Wendish migrants here. We also presented their library with some books about the Barossa Valley and Australia.



Gertrud, Lois & Lyall, Annerose (Director of Sorb Institute)

A contrasting museum was the infamous prison used in turn by the Nazis, the Russians, and finally the Stasi. There were many harrowing stories told.

The nearby village of Hochkirch was interesting as many Australian Wends came from this district. Here we met Pastor Thomas Hänchen who had visited Australia in 2003 and given a talk to our society. This was also the site of a terrible battle in 1758 when 8000 Austrians and 9000 Prussians were killed.

Close by was the town of Herrnhut, the centre of the Moravian Brethren Church. The light and simple interior of their church contrasted dramatically with the elaborate decorations in most other churches throughout Europe. The Völkerkundemuseum (ethnographic museum) was

a highlight of the town with exhibits from around the world, sent home by Moravian missionaries in the 19th century, including some Aboriginal items from Australia.

To the west of Bautzen we visited Rosenthal, the hometown of the late Alfons Frenzel. This Catholic area was noticeable for the many shrines along the country roads.

We travelled north to Lower Lusatia and stayed near Burg in the Spreewald. Here the River Spree divides into numerous canals which pass through forest areas. Taking a punt (*Kahn*) trip along the canals, being poled along by the ferryman is a special experience. The ride is gentle and relaxing along shady streams, through locks, meeting other punts and canoes.



At Jänschwalde we visited the Heimatmuseum and were excited to see a school register from the 19th century with names of people who came to Australia, including my Hondow ancestors.

At Langengrassau we went to the Freiland Museum Höllberghof, an open-air museum, which was celebrating the harvest festival. It was here that a Sorbian dancing group performed, with the women wearing the same dress as we have in our society's collection. Then they exhibited their wedding dress, which again was identical to the one in our collection (see March 2016 newsletter).

On the Sunday morning we attended the harvest thanksgiving service in the church at Burg. Here we met a lady in traditional costume, who was keen to tell us that in this district they call themselves Wends, not Sorbs.

These are some of the highlights of our visit. I can't wait to go there again.

Lyall Kupke

For Sale

Books from Germany - in English:

- *Easter with the Sorbs* - \$1, plus \$1 postage
- *The Winter Season among the Sorbs* - \$1, plus \$1 postage
- *Sorbian Customs & Traditions in the course of the year* - \$1, plus \$1 postage
- *A Slav Nation in Germany* - 50c, plus \$1 postage
- *The Sorbs of Germany* - \$5, plus \$3 postage
- *Upper Lusatia* - \$15, plus \$3 postage
- *Bautzen* - \$15, plus \$3 postage
- Korall & Schwikart, *Journey through the Spree Forest* (in English with lovely pictures) - \$35, plus \$10 postage

Also the best books about the Wends in Australia:

- Burger, *The Coming of the Wends* - \$12, plus \$3 postage
- Nielsen, *In Search of a Home* (second edition, hard cover) - \$40, plus \$10 postage

CDs:

- *From Wendish to German to English (A Journey into Wendish Culture, History & Language)*
This marvellous CD has been produced by the Texas Wendish Heritage Society. It contains English narration, German and Wendish singing by a German choir performing at Texas in 2002, talks by noted Wendish (Sorbian) historians Dr George Nielsen and Gertrud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa). George Nielsen talks about Wendish migration to Australia. *A real treat!*
Cost = \$30, plus \$3 postage

New CDs:

Cost \$10 each, plus \$3 postage

- Kocor, *Serbski kwas* (The Sorbian wedding). [Operatic in style, joyful, recurring folk themes.]
- Kocor, *Naleco* (Spring). [Majestic oratorio, with memorable, joyful and folk-like themes]
- Zahraj nam rejiku (*Sorbische Folklore mit Sprjewjan*) [Lively folk music, instrumental and vocal work]
- Krawc-Schneider, *Missa Solemnis* [Solemn impassioned classical work, organ and choir, sung in Latin]

Contact Ruth Walter, 43 Clifton St, Prospect SA 5082, (tel. 08 8269 7168),
email: ruth.walter43@gmail.com

Please make cheques or money orders to Wend Sorb Society of South Australia.

We welcome any contributions to this newsletter. Please send them to the Editor at the address below.

This newsletter was published by the **Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia Inc.**

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