



## Strathalbyn & district tour

Since Eric & Ruth Fiebig have retired from organising our bus trips, Malcolm Twartz offered to plan one this year around Strathalbyn, his home ground. On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April we left South Terrace at 8.30 am with driver John Kleemann on our very comfortable Woodside coach. Skies were grey, but with no wind or rain it was very comfortable weather-wise.

Travelling via the Southeast Freeway, we turned off to Strathalbyn through rolling green hills and pockets of bush. Malcolm pointed out a ruin which had been the home of the Hattam family. Their daughter Mary was killed near Ceduna at age 9 and Rupert Maxwell Stuart, an Aboriginal, was found guilty of her murder – a verdict which was later questioned.

John successfully negotiated tricky sections of road, scraping over two dry fords before we reached Strathalbyn for morning tea. Stretching our legs on the grassy bank of the River Angas, we enjoyed tea, coffee and streusel kuchen and were also entertained by ducks and moorhens. Scottish pioneers settled Strathalbyn in 1839, and it has many interesting old buildings, charming stone cottages, cafes, restaurants and attractive gardens.



*Morning tea at Strathalbyn gardens*

Leaving Strathalbyn we passed the old railway line at Panketyi station and the Twartz home farm where Malcolm's parents raised cats, chooks, cows and pigs. Malcolm showed detailed knowledge of the history of the area and also a dry sense of humour with many amusing tales of country life. He entertained us with the tale of using his experience as church worship leader to provide a funeral for a horse. After digging the hole, a vet attended to the death, and together they sang "All things bright and beautiful".

Reaching the Highland Valley trig point on Stirling Hill gave us a wonderful view overlooking the river plain all

the way to Lake Alexandrina. Trigonometric stations or trig points are surveying points in line of sight of others, usually on high points with great views. They were used in measuring distance, direction and creating maps before the advent of GPS.

Rough stone fences appeared as the countryside became drier and rocky – the annual rainfall in this area drops an inch per mile. Malcolm's parents danced in the hall at Woodchester where the former school is now a private residence. We passed a Werner property, then properties either side of the road owned by Jaensch descendants before reaching **Salem** church just off the road.



*Salem Lutheran Church*

German settlers formed a congregation here in 1856, building their first church which later became the manse, then a school and a hall. The current church was built in 1891 with the new hall added in 1977. Apparently the early pastors had a stipend of 75 pounds, to which individual members had to contribute. Some did, some didn't and some insisted on a pastoral visit before contributing.

The picturesque church setting has been used in films (including *Rabbit Proof Fence*, and the television series, *Rain Shadow*). Some of us found a fascinating folder of old postcards sent early in the 1900s. Mostly in German, one in English had a request from one farmer for some Federation Wheat from his relative. Others of us found time to look through the well-kept cemetery. It contained graves with German names like Jaensch and Wundersitz, but no Wends.

Next was **Langhorne Creek**, where many residents have double letters in their surnames – like Potts and

Willson. We passed white shale and scrub mallee before reaching almond orchards, olive groves and finally vineyards – 160 years old. Situated on a broad floodplain between the Angas and Bremer Rivers, this area has also had a eucalyptus distillery, horseradish farm, rifle and footy clubs.

At the **Bleasdale Winery** we were greeted by Robbie Potts and enjoyed wine tasting and a fascinating history tour. His ancestor, Frank Potts, arrived on the *Buffalo* in 1836, after being a “powder monkey” and starting his naval career on Nelson’s *Victory*. On Kangaroo Island he built a ketch, was asked to construct the ferry at Wellington over the Murray River, and built three paddle-steamers of red gum.



He finally bought 120 acres at Langhorne Creek and constructed a system of locks and weirs along the Bremer River in the 1850s and 60s to capture winter floodwater. Potts established vineyards, then built a winery of limestone and red gum and produced fortified wines. A visiting Rev. John Bleasdale from Victoria preached on the benefits of communion wine, giving the winery its name. When Potts died in 1890 he had already made his coffin of red gum!

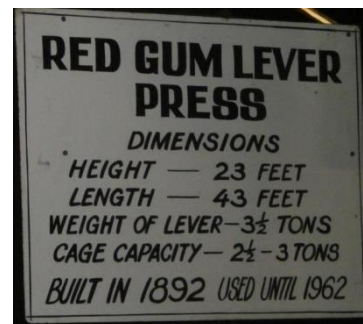
We saw massive red gum wine barrels and a gigantic wine press with an enormous lever of 2 red gum trunks bolted together, which was originally raised by a team of bullocks through chain pulleys. These days tastes have changed so more red and white table wines are currently produced.



*Red gum lever wine press*

Continuing on we passed Bormann Turf with 250 acres of green, smooth lawn, Santa Anna and some kikuyu,

which is sold via Munns and also provided to venues like Adelaide Oval. Then came Talinga Grove with a Wendish connection - a Jenke family produce olive oil – and a flock of pesky corellas. Next was Willyaroo, formerly named New Hamburg until 1917.



After a tasty lunch back at **Strathalbyn** Lutheran church hall, provided by the congregation, we entered the church and learned some of its history. Malcolm had explained that the congregation originally worshipped in a Rechabite hall, and then a supper room in the town hall, before building the church, its foundation stone dated 16 May 1954. A Wendish descendant, Pastor Rupert Burger (author of *The Coming of the Wends*) served the congregation as part of his Victor Harbor parish from 1953 to 1956. Malcolm served as secretary and Clive Wundersitz as parish chairman, from 1983 to their retirement in February 2017.



*Malcolm Twartz and Robbie Potts*

Although we did not visit the local cemetery, Wendish names including Laucke and Twartz may be found there, and the Laucke flour mill still has a commanding presence in the town. The Tourist Information Centre and Art Gallery had just closed for the day, but some of us enjoyed seeing the Steam Ranger Heritage Railway train at the station next-door with tourists aboard, before it continued its journey from Mt. Barker via Strathalbyn to Goolwa and then onto Victor Harbor. Finally we had time for a quick visit on the bus to Terramin’s Angas Zinc Mine, which tunnelled under a swamp and left a huge and deep excavated hole.

Returning to Adelaide, participants had much to discuss and Malcolm is to be thanked for such an informative tour and for his entertaining anecdotes.

*Pauline Burger*

## Coming Events

### **Sun 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July, 12 noon Lunch at the German Club**

Join other members for a delicious German meal at the German Club, 223 Flinders St, Adelaide.

Bookings are essential. Contact me (Tel: 0431 991 385, Email: [kupkell@yahoo.com](mailto:kupkell@yahoo.com))

### **Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> August, 9am–4.30pm Researching Ancestors in Germany seminar**

German genealogical expert Dirk Weissleder heads a group of presenters on day 2 of a two day seminar.

At the German Club, 223 Flinders St, Adelaide. See more details on page 6.

### **Sun 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2pm Annual General Meeting**

Followed by Wendish films and afternoon tea.

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

### **Sun 15<sup>th</sup> October, Friends of Peters Hill Church day**

11 am church service, shared lunch, 1 pm AGM. Note: this is a tentative date. Please check later.

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 12 noon Lunch at the German Club**

Another opportunity for a delicious German meal at the German Club, 223 Flinders St, Adelaide.

Bookings are essential. Contact me (Tel: 0431 991 385, Email: [kupkell@yahoo.com](mailto:kupkell@yahoo.com))

## *From the President*

Our bus trip to historic Strathalbyn was enjoyed by all. Our thanks go to Malcolm Twartz for his detailed organisation and his interesting information. Read the report on pages 1 & 2.

The question now is: what about next year's bus trip? Who will organise it? Has anyone any ideas about where to go? All suggestions will be appreciated.

Peter Mickan's talk at the Burnside Library about the fate of the Wendish language in SA was also very informative. Read the report on page 4.

At our meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

Our lunches at the German Club have been very popular and so we are continuing to arrange them about three times a year. Please join us for a delicious German meal and good fellowship if you can.

At our AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> August we will elect the committee for the next year as usual. There are still some vacant positions on the committee and we would like to fill them with some new faces. New people bring new ideas and that's always important to have. Do you know of anyone who would be willing to join?

For those researching their family history in Germany take note of the seminar being held on 24<sup>th</sup> August. Visiting German genealogist Dirk Weissleder is the special guest presenter. Not to be missed. Bookings essential. See page 6 for more details.

*Lyall Kupke*



# How the Wendish language was lost

It was a lovely sunny autumn day on 4<sup>th</sup> May at the Burnside Library when a well-attended and publicized event for about 80 people was held for History SA month.

The topic, **'The Mystery of the Lost Language: the Wendish Language in South Australia'**, was presented by Dr Peter Mickan from the Linguistics Department of the University of Adelaide.

Lyall Kupke welcomed the audience and introduced Dr Mickan with a greeting in the Wendish language (Dobry dzień! meaning Good day!).



Dr Mickan gave an overview of the Wendish history in Australia. The Sorbs, known as the Wends in Australia, migrated to Australia from the political and economic turmoil in Saxony and Prussia for a new life in a new land with new opportunities, and to buy the abundant, good, cheap farming land that was available. There was peace and freedom of worship for the conservative Lutherans and Catholics.

The Wends are a Slavic people with a similar language to the Polish people. They are a separate group to Germans. It is very important to remind ourselves that the Wends are Slavic. The Wends were very aspirational with a background of withstanding much political change and trouble.

The Wends were bilingual when they migrated and spoke both Wendish and German. After migration they soon learnt English. The settlers' children were discouraged from using the Wendish language at home as parents were told it

was detrimental to the child's learning of the English language and assimilation into the Australian culture. However, Dr Mickan stressed the importance of maintaining the parents' language such as the Wendish language at home. Also Dr Mickan implored the audience to learn a language as it improved the brain capacity and function.

Dr Mickan discussed the unique Barossa German dialect used by the Wendish settlers and others in the community, which had been considered a poor German rather than a distinct branch of the German language.

The Wendish language was gradually forgotten through lack of use, as German was the main language used. Also marriage between Wends and Germans hastened the decline in the use of Wendish. Of the first generation of Wends in Australia 52% of those from Lower Lusatia married Germans and 38% married Wends, whereas with Wends from Upper Lusatia 65% married Germans and only 27% married Wends.

There is concern about the future of the Wendish language in Germany today due to the lack of government policies to support the use of the Wendish language in schools.

Finally, Dr Mickan reminded the audience that although the Wendish language is not used any more in Australia, the Wendish heritage remains with the round faces and fair skin still evident in the children born to those with this heritage.

Everyone enjoyed the knowledgeable PowerPoint presentation. The Wendish flags and our Society's new banner, together with the extensive artefacts display including painted eggs, Wendish dolls, needlework and picture calendars, as well as our mannequin in her striking outfit made an impressive reminder of our home-land.

We enrolled 5 new members to join our society. Members of the committee worked hard to make the event a great success. We enjoyed socialising during morning tea and lunch. We are very grateful to the Burnside Library for facilitating this enjoyable and enriching event.

*Marie Brazier*

# 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 three newsletters) the record of the Wends who served:

BIDSTRUP, Alfred Cyril, (mother's maiden name was ZWAR), from Warra Q; 1<sup>st</sup> Machine Gun Squadron, served in Egypt; Returned to Australia May-July 1919.

HORWOOD, Edwin, (grandmother's maiden name was ZIMMER), from Preston V; 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion, served at Gallipoli and Western Front; Returned to Australia March 1917, Died of wounds 20 July 1917, aged 28, buried Coburg Cemetery, V.

HORWOOD, Leonard, (grandmother's maiden name was ZIMMER), from Preston V; 13<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, served at Gallipoli and Western Front; Returned to Australia July 1919.

HORWOOD, Robert William, (grandmother's maiden name was ZIMMER), from Preston V; 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, served at Gallipoli and Western Front; Killed in action at Pozieres, France, 26 July 1916, aged 24, no known grave.

HORWOOD, Vincent, (grandmother's maiden name was ZIMMER), from Preston V; driver 1<sup>st</sup> Aust Div HQ, served in Egypt and Western Front; Returned to Australia March 1918.

JONES, Robert Edward Griffith, (step-grandmother's maiden name was WUCHATSCH), from Fremantle WA; 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion; Returned to Australia June-July 1919.

THOMAS, Albert, (mother's maiden name was DOECKE), from Bethel SA; 32<sup>nd</sup> Battalion; Killed in action, 6 March 1917, aged 32, no known grave.

WHYTE, Melville, (grandmother's maiden name was ZIMMER), from Malmesbury V; 60<sup>th</sup> & 59<sup>th</sup> Battalions; Returned to Australia June-Aug 1919.

WUCHATSCH, Benjamin George, from Bena V; 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, served at Gallipoli and Middle East; awarded Military Medal; Returned to Australia July-Aug 1919, (suicided 1920).

WUCHATSCH, Francis Joseph, from Bena V; 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, served at Gallipoli and Western Front; Returned to Australia Sept-Nov 1918.

WUCHATSCH, Raymond Royal, from Bena V; 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion; Returned to Australia April-May 1919

ZWAR, Keith Henderson, from Beechworth V; 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Field Ambulance, served in Egypt; Returned to Australia Nov 1919 – Jan 1920.

ZWAR, Raymond Albert, from Preston V; 15<sup>th</sup> GS Reinforcements; was at South Africa on the way to Europe when the Armistice occurred, so he was returned to Australia Nov 1918.

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).

# What to pack for the voyage?

[from the *Texas Wendish Society newsletter*, Jan 2017]

What did our ancestors bring with them on the voyage to Australia? Obviously the later migrants were able to get the advice of the earlier migrants who had the experience.

We can get a clue from a letter of a passenger who travelled to Texas in 1854 writing to his relatives back home. He listed the items to bring if they migrated, and which items to leave in Europe.

**Do not bring:** women's costumes (*Trachten*), women's Wendish jackets, cooking vessels, lots of cloth, and for unmarried women, don't bring a husband because the choice is better in Texas.

**Bring:** linen cloth and aprons, cloth pants, blue and grey thread, woollen stockings and jackets, a spinning wheel, scythes, blacksmith tongs, manure forks, a grubbing hoe, an iron shovel (without the handle), men's boots, women's shoes, cigars, tobacco, a wooden pipe for smoking, coffee cups, round spoons, small iron pots, and if you are a single male bring a Wendish wife because "they know how to take hold of things."

Does anyone know of any similar letter written from Australia?

## Researching Abroad

A two day seminar on researching family history in Europe will be held on Wed-Thurs 23-24 August at the German Club, 223 Flinders St, Adelaide. Two leading international family history presenters and some local experts will speak.

The first day will examine researching the British Isles and Chris Paton from Scotland will be the guest presenter. The topic of the second day is research in Germany and Dirk Weissleder from Germany is the main presenter. Dirk is the coordinator of the German-Australian Genealogical Alliance.

The cost is \$87 for both days, or \$57 for one day.

Book online at [www.unlockmypast.com.au/researching-abroad](http://www.unlockmypast.com.au/researching-abroad) , or tel 8263 2055

## 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.

# To Make Reading the Wendish/Sorbian language easier

(from *Nowy Casnik*, Jan 1997, translated by Hans Renner)

The Sorbian alphabet is similar to the German one. However, a Slavic language has certain unique features. The hissing sounds are especially difficult for many readers of the *Casnik* (newspaper) and of Sorbian books. We often hear it said in the villages: “The hooks and strokes above the letters make reading difficult for us”.

Therefore we would like to help our readers by using the **phonetic** way of writing and give simple explanations how to pronounce such letters.

Let's begin with the **three Hissing sounds**:

- s in sarna (= roe deer), kosa (= scythe)  
Pronounce as German *ss* or *ß*, like kossa (short and hard)
- z in zub (= tooth), koza (= goat)  
Pronounce as German *s*, like sub, kosa (long and soft)
- c in wocy (= eyes), pjac (= baking oven)  
Pronounce as German *z* in Blitz, like wotzy, pjatz

Now we come to the Hissing sounds that have been altered by **additional hooks and strokes**:

- š in šula (= school), košula (= skirt)  
Pronounce as the German *sch* in schulz, schmidt, like schula, koschula
- ž in žaba (= frog), koža (= skin)  
Pronounce as the German *dsch* in Dschungel, but without pronouncing the d,  
like (d)schaba, ko(d)scha
- č in česki (= czech), ryjnučki (= very skinny)  
Pronounce as German *tsch*, like tscheski, ryjnutschki
- ś in śota (= aunt), groniś (= say, speak)  
Pronounce like a soft *sch* (=sh), like schota, gronisch
- ź in źiwy (= wild), wiženje (= to see)  
Pronounce a soft (d)*sch*, like shiwy, wishenje
- ć in pasć (= to herd), mosćik (= small bridge)  
Pronounce a soft *tsch* as in č, like pastsch, mostschik

Finally **three more letters** that are not so well known:

- ě in mězo (= meat), měr (= peace)  
Pronounce like German *ie* (= ee), like mieso (= meeso), mier (= meer)
- ł in ławka (= bank), woł (= ox)  
Pronounce as in German *w* (= v) (soft), like vawka, wov
- ń in woń (= scent), wulicowańko  
Pronounce as wojn, wulicowajanko

Now practise these:

Dobry dzeń = Good day / hello!  
Božemje = Goodbye!

Džakuju so! = Thank you!  
Prošu! = Excuse me!

# For Sale

## Books from Germany - in English:

- *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]

## Calendars:

I will take orders for Calendars for 2018 – with scenes from Lusatia

These are really beautiful, and they make great Christmas presents. You must order *straight away*, so that we can get them from Germany before the end of the year.

Cost = \$25, plus \$7 postage

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