



What does our logo mean?

Some people ask about the meaning of our logo above. Here's the explanation.

It goes back to the origins of our society in the 1980s. It was first known as the Australian-German Democratic Republic Friendship Society and it promoted exchanges between Australians of Wendish descent and Sorbs (Wends) in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Hence the image of the shaking of hands. The leaves represent the linden tree, which is the floral emblem of the Sorbs (Wends).

With the German reunification in 1990, our society was renamed the Australia-Lusatian Society. Finally in 1998 it became the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia, its present name.

Over the years we have had numerous visits of Sorbs (Wends) from Germany. The most notable was the visit by teacher and writer, Alfons Frenzel (Frencl), who visited SA, NSW and Victoria in 1990 and gave talks about the Sorbs/Wends of Lusatia. We have learned much about our heritage from these visitors.

New venue for meetings

Please note that our usual meeting hall at the Glynde Lutheran retirement homes is not available this year as it is being rebuilt. So we will meet at a different venue – not far away.

Our meetings on 8th July and 12th August will be held at the **Glynde Lutheran Church, 15 Glynburn Rd, Glynde**. This is near the corner of Glynburn Road and Payneham Road.

Parking is available at the rear of the church. Entry to the carpark is from Lewis Road.

ELECTIONS:

The following office-bearers were elected at the AGM (27 Aug 2017):

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.

Change in Victoria

New postal address for Wendish Heritage Society in Victoria:

PO Box 4050

Box Hill South V 3128

Their extensive Wendish Research Library is still located at

St Aidan's Community Centre,

12 Surrey St,

Box Hill South, Vic.

It is open on the 1st Sunday of the month (Feb-Nov), 1.30pm – 5pm.

President's AGM Report (given on 27 Aug 2017)

We were pleased to take part in the first Australian History & Genealogy EXPO on 7th-8th October at Immanuel College last year (2016). A number of committee members took turns at our stall and we were reasonably busy all the time, answering questions, handing out brochures and selling books. We were pleased to help some people discover their Wendish roots. A detailed report is found in our March newsletter.

We were able to show off our new colourful banner at the EXPO. Thanks go to Eric Fiebig for preparing the design.

We were fortunate to be able to hold our annual bus trip this year because Malcolm Twartz offered to organise it around his home town of Strathalbyn. He did a great job and the tour of the district was thoroughly presented with many a humorous anecdote. Thank you, Malcolm. A detailed report is found in the July newsletter.

Do we have an offer to organise next year's trip? Our members have always enjoyed these excursions and look forward to them each year. If you would like to help organise one or have any ideas, please let the committee know.

We were privileged to have Dr Peter Mickan as our speaker at the Burnside Library during History SA month in May. Peter was able to enlighten us on the fate of the Wendish language in Australia and the difficulties involved in preserving minority languages throughout the world. A detailed report can be found in the July newsletter.

At our July meeting Keith Lokan gave an illustrated talk on his trip to the Lusatian Lake District. He showed us photos of the lakes that have been created out of the old open cut coal mines in Middle Lusatia. The plan is to connect 10 lakes with canals to allow boats to pass through and turn this wasteland into a popular holiday region.

Since last AGM we have organised three lunches at the German Club, in November, February and July. Up to 20 members have enjoyed the social mixing and the German food, so we aim to continue to arrange these gatherings about three times a year.

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: Marie Brazier, Pauline Burger and Brian Hennig. A number of members now receive the newsletter by email in colour. If you also wish to get it by email, make sure you tell us.

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.

Finally, my thanks go to the hard-working committee. We have been pleased to have Barbara Day and Jurgen Lehmann as new members. Unfortunately Louine Tay resigned due to family reasons. 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 10th – Mon 12th March Wendish Heritage Society's Weekend Tour

At Horsham in the Wimmera. Tour leader is Betty Huf.

It is proposed to visit historic sites in **Rupanyup** and **Murtoa** on Saturday. One of the highlights will be a **Silo Art Tour** to view the impressive paintings on disused grain silos in the Wimmera on Sunday.

Please make your own accommodation arrangements.

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

Sat 7th April, 12 noon Lunch at the Old Mill, Hahndorf

Join other members for a delicious German meal.

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

Sat 28th April Not-a-Bus trip: In the Footsteps of our Ancestors

Following the trail of the pioneers from Klemzig to Hope Valley.

Details on page 7 of this newsletter.

Thurs 10th May, 10.30 am Talk: Australian Wends in World War One

Some of our committee members will tell the stories of their relatives.

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 2018 program (www.historyfestival.sa.gov.au) for booking details. Bookings (in April) are essential.

Sun 8th July, 2 pm Talk: Stories of our Wendish Ancestors

Five committee members will tell the stories of their Wendish ancestors (Burger, Dalitz, Fladrich, Hondow, Rentsch, Zwar).

**** NOTE:** Different venue - at Zion Lutheran Church (*15 Glynburn Rd, Glynde*). Car parking at the back - off Lewis Rd. All welcome.

Sun 12th August, 2pm Annual General Meeting

**** NOTE:** Different venue - at Zion Lutheran Church (*15 Glynburn Rd, Glynde*). Car parking at the back - off Lewis Rd. All welcome.

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.

SORBS or WENDS?

Were our ancestors Wends or Sorbs? That is a question that has puzzled many of us since we have recently heard the term, Sorbs, being used instead of Wends. It is also a question of debate in Germany, as the following article shows.

The following article was published in the Sorbian (Wendish) newspaper, *Nowy Casnik*, at Bautzen in January 1997. The author was Horst Adam. It was translated from the German into English for our newsletter by Dr Lois Zweck, of Adelaide.

SORBS or WENDS?

Whenever the Sorbs and their culture and language are discussed, the Wends are usually mentioned in the same breath. There are a lot of questions and different opinions on this topic, not only among visitors to Lusatia, but also on the part of those who live in the area. Who are the Sorbs and who are the Wends? Who speaks Sorbian, who speak Wendish?

So what is the really going on here? To put it simply, 'Sorbian' and 'Wendish' are just different terms for one and the same thing. The one term - Sorbian - is scientifically more precise, the other -Wendish - is more popular. But both have historical origins, and have been documented in the academic literature. It is of interest that the Sorbs/Wends call themselves 'Serbs' ('serbski') in their own mother tongue. From that one can draw the conclusion that the term 'Sorb' is their own term, while 'Wend' originated as a term used by foreigners. The Sorbs are of course not alone in having such a double name, the same applies to many other peoples throughout the world.

There is a wide-spread opinion that the Wends live in Lower Lusatia - particularly in the Spreewald and around Cottbus - while the Sorbs are at home in Upper Lusatia - primarily around Bautzen and Kamenz., That does not however correspond to the facts, because one encounters the term 'Wend'/'Wendish' again and again in the bilingual area of Saxony [Upper Lusatia]. The truth is however that this particular term [Wend] has taken root more firmly amongst the local population of Lower Lusatia, and once more there are historical reasons for that.

From the scientific point of view, the Sorb population in Lower Lusatia is classified as 'Lower Sorb', while those living in Upper Lusatia are 'Upper Sorbs'. There are by the same token two terms for the corresponding independent languages, Lower and Upper Sorbian.

But how did the two terms come about? Where does the term 'Wends', which also occurs in various versions and contexts in other regions of Germany (e.g. Wendland in Luneburg), come from?

The answer is to be found in history. Originally the term was used in the Germanic languages for the non-Slavic Veneto-Illyrian tribes (including those in Slovenia and in Northern Italy, e.g. Venice) who occupied the area between the Germanic and the Slavic peoples in the period from the Bronze Age to the time of Christ. When those peoples ceased to exist, the name was given to the new eastern neighbours - the Slavs, who had settled in the territory of eastern Germany during the period of the great migrations (ca. 400 AD). The Roman chroniclers Pliny and Tacitus spoke of the 'Vendi' and 'Venethi'. When various Slavic peoples or tribes later created their own states - e.g. Poland and Slovakia - they were given names based directly on those states. But the term 'Wends' continued to be applied to those groups which were not able to form their own state - such as the Slavs in Mecklenburg and the Slovenes in Austria. But today the term is only used to refer to the Sorbs in Lusatia.

The name 'Sorb'/'Sorb' - found as 'Surbi' already in the writings of the Frankish chronicler Fredegar in 631/632 AD - is more exact and more concrete, and corresponds to what the people called themselves. Originally the name was understood to mean the Slavic population between the rivers Saale and Mulde, but then it came to mean the whole grouping of Sorbian tribes, and in particular the Milzener and the Lusizer in Upper and Lower Lusatia.

This brief historical explanation shows that the two terms existed simultaneously and parallel to one another. But there were of course differences in usage in individual periods or regions, or among different social groups in the Sorbian/Wendish population. After 1945 attempts were made, including by the Sorbs themselves, to suppress the term 'Wends', primarily on the basis that the name had been used in a discriminatory and derogatory manner in public opinion, particularly during the period from 1933-1945.

But in this campaign, little tolerance or sensitivity was shown, and historic factors which had applied for centuries were ignored. Particularly in Lower Lusatia that led to a situation where a significant number of members of this small ethnic group distanced themselves from the Sorb cause, remaining reserved and aloof because they did not feel that the name Sorb applied to them.

And today? One tries to learn from experience. The right thing is to treat both terms as co-existing with equal validity, as in the double name 'Sorb/Wend', which is by now very widespread and well accepted. The important thing is that the members of this ethnic group are conscious of their responsibility for the maintenance and continued existence of their language and culture, and are prepared to work for it, whether it be as Sorbs or as Wends.



Bilingual street sign (German-Sorbian) in Bautzen (Wendish Street – Sorbian Street)

From the President

The Victorian Wendish long weekend in March is on again this year. As Horsham is just over the border, 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). Many Wends moved from South Australia to the Wimmera when it was opened up to closer settlement in the 1870s and 1880s. 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 lunches at the German Club in the past have been enjoyed by a number of people each time. We have decided to trial a different venue for our next lunch – at the Old Mill restaurant at Hahndorf. So please join us on Saturday 7th April at 12 noon for a great afternoon of fellowship. Please let me know if you are coming so that I can book a large enough table.

Our Not-a-Bus Trip on Saturday 29th April will follow the footsteps of our ancestors from Klemzig to Hope Valley. As we are only going short distances, we will travel by cars instead of a bus. After lunch at the Tea Tree Gully Hotel we will visit the nearby Old Highercombe Hotel Folk Museum. Note that our starting point is at Pioneer Cemetery at Klemzig. Please notify me if you are coming, so that I can book enough afternoon tea at the museum! See the details on page 7.

In May, as part of the SA History month festival, six of our committee members will be talking about the contribution of their Wendish relatives in World War One. 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.

Please note that our meetings on 8th July and 12th August will be held at a different venue - at Zion Lutheran Church (**15 Glynburn Rd, Glynde**). Car parking at the back - off Lewis Rd.

Lyall Kupke

German Wends in World War One

Gerald Stone in his recent book, *Slav Outposts in Central European History*, makes some interesting comments about the situation of the Wends in Lusatia during the First World War.

Throughout the 19th century the Wends had struggled to assert their right to maintain their own language and identity in Germany. They published their own newspaper in the Wendish language. They held Wendish song festivals. They supported Wendish school instruction and Wendish church services.

However, the German government hoped that the Wends would be Germanised and assimilate into German society. Thus when war broke out there was concern about the loyalty of the Wends. It was feared that they might support Russia, who was Germany's enemy, as the Russians were fellow slaves with the Wends.

Wendish leaders were kept under police surveillance. Wendish newspapers were subject to censorship and copy had to be approved before publication.

In April 1915 the censor considered a letter sent to the Wendish newspaper *Serbske Nowiny*, written by a Wendish soldier to his relatives in Rohne, in the parish of Schleife, describing events at the front at Easter 1915:

'On Easter Day we lay in our trenches near the little Polish town of Łopuszno facing the Russians. It was a fine day and peacefully quiet around us. Suddenly a few Russians came running from their trench and placed a pot of Easter eggs in the middle between them and us, saying "For the eggs – vodka"; then they went back again. It wasn't long before we had replaced the eggs with a bottle of good schnapps. The Russians didn't wait, but quickly took it. After a little while we saw to our surprise a crowd of Russians coming up out of their trench, stopping in front of it, and starting to dance. We didn't need asking twice, but climbed out of the trench, with a concertina, of course, and twirled in competition with the Russians. When we had amused ourselves like that for quite a while, they offered us their hand to say goodbye, promising not to shoot at us that day, and went back to their trench. And they kept their promise too, for there wasn't a single shot the whole day and so we could continue to celebrate our Easter in peace. H.K.'

The censor informed the editor that accounts of 'so-called scenes of fraternisation between friend and foe' were forbidden and that the letter could therefore not be published.

This account reminds us of the Christmas truce on the Western Front in December 1914. If you google 'Easter Truce' you will also find a reference to an Easter truce on the Eastern Front in 1916 when the western and orthodox dates for Easter coincided.

The case of Jurij Delenk, a Catholic priest and editor of a Wendish Catholic paper, also indicates the distrust of Wends. He was conscripted into the German army and selected to be an army chaplain. However, because he had been publicly involved in Wendish activities he was considered as politically unreliable and rejected as chaplain.

Sympathy

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

Kevin Modra, husband of Margaret.

Frieda Mirtschin in Victoria.

Barrie Phillips, husband of Pat.

Not-a-Bus Trip -

In the Footsteps of our Ancestors

Follow the trail taken by our ancestors from Klemzig to Hope Valley. On arrival in South Australia the Wends first settled at either Klemzig or Hope Valley before moving further out into the country.

Saturday 28th April, 9.30 am – 4.00 pm

What we will see:

Klemzig Pioneer Cemetery - examine the monuments and hear the story of the early Lutheran pioneers. Inspect the old road across the River Torrens.

Hope Valley Cemetery on Grand Junction Road - inspect the Wendish Pioneer Heritage sign and look at the old German headstones.

Lunch at the Tea Tree Gully Hotel on North East Road. (Pay for your choice of meal.)

Old Highercombe Hotel Folk Museum – inspect the museum with its beautifully refurbished rooms taking you back in time and enjoy a sumptuous afternoon tea (Admission \$10).



Klemzig memorial sign



Wendish sign at Hope Valley

Please note: this is Not a Bus Trip. We will travel by private cars.

Meet at the Klemzig Pioneer Cemetery at Spring Grove, Klemzig, at 9.30 am. Bring a folding chair to use at Klemzig during the talk, if you like.

We will not be collecting any money. You pay for your meal at the hotel and the admission fee of \$10 at the museum (includes afternoon tea).

Please inform me by 23rd April if you are coming, as I need to notify the numbers for afternoon tea. Telephone or text Lyall Kupke at 0431 991 385, or (08) 8365 2572, or email kupkell@yahoo.com

For Sale

Books from Germany - in English:

- *The Sorbs of Germany* - \$10, plus \$3 postage
- *Upper Lusatia* - \$15, plus \$3 postage
- *Bautzen* - \$12, 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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