



The Lokan journey

by Pauline Burger

“Dobry dzień”. Our President Lyall Kupke began with this Wendish greeting (meaning “Good day”) at the Burnside Library on 6th May. As part of History Month SA, Lyall then introduced our speaker, Dr Keith Lokan, a retired physicist.



Keith’s talk, illustrated by PowerPoint slides, was both informative and entertaining. He began with the background to his Lokan family’s decision to migrate to South Australia. In 1848 a Martin Teschner from Turnow arrived here on the ship *Victoria*. He wrote glowing letters back to Lusatia which were published in 1850. His descriptions of life in the colony of South Australia contrasted with the conditions in Lusatia. As the feudal system collapsed, the lords and nobles relinquished power, but the serfs or peasants lost their homes and secure employment. They turned to day labour, but unemployment became an issue. The potato blight and failure of other crops added to precarious conditions.

Hannah Lokan, whose husband Hans had died, endured these tough times in Lusatia and the Teschner report led her to migrate from Turnow to South Australia. In 1856 she arrived with her children on the ship *Sophie*. This was the start of the Lokan story in Australia.

One son, Matthes, leased land in Tea Tree Gully, and the Lokan family thrived in that area, working at the Tolley Scott & Tolley winery, and as carriers.

Today, a Lokan Street and Lokan Grove in the local suburb of Redwood Park remain as a record of their lives in this location.

From Tea Tree Gully, Lokan descendants moved to Tailem Bend and further, being now scattered around Australia. By the 1920-30s the family had increased to around 150 members. Most lost their Wendish language quickly, except Keith’s great grandfather Martin, who could still speak it up to his death in 1938. Within a generation, the Lokans were comfortably absorbed into their local communities — a pattern familiar to many listeners. Early generations worked in rural occupations, but with the availability of higher education from the 1950s the next generation took up a variety of professions.



Lokan wagon at the Tea Tree Gully Museum

Keith has delved into his family history over the last 20 years and travelled to Lusatia. In a church in Peitz (near Turnow), and later in Simmersdorf (see below), he found up to 7 different spellings of the name Lokan, and he also explained that the original pronunciation was “Lockan” (rather than “Lowkan”). He also found his original ancestor was described as a “Colonist” as he had moved to the village of Turnow from another village called Simmersdorf. Keith was then helped by the local pastor in Simmersdorf to find out even more about his ancestor, and actually met a Lockan descendant. In a photo of Keith and his relative, Werner Lockan, the two men could have been taken for brothers (see photo on page 2).

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We also heard more about Lusatia. In the late 1800s to late 1900s, the region became very industrial with many open cut brown coal mines. The coal was a low-grade source of energy and since the reunification of Germany in 1990 the mines were gradually shut down. They have been re-developed into a series of lakes, mostly interconnected, transforming the landscape, as we saw from Keith's slides, and with walking trails, trees and locks it has become a holiday playground.

Keith also had a photo of a reconstructed Wendish fort at Raddusch. Remnants had been uncovered in one of the nearby mines. Apparently the Wends made these 7-8 metre thick walled forts for protection, and could seal themselves inside when threatened by marauders. With a source of water inside and other provisions, they would outlast any attack.



Reconstructed Wendish fort at Raddusch



Inside the fort at Raddusch



Werner Lockan & Keith Lokan in Germany

This was an inspirational talk which demonstrated how fascinating family history can be when intertwined with history and geography, and also how rewarding it is when it results in uncovering little gems of information about ancestors.

Coming Events

Sun 21st August, 2 pm Annual General Meeting

Followed by a talk on the **Duldig family** in Australia, by Leona Coleman
At the Glynde Lutheran Homes hall (22 Avenue Rd, Glynde). All welcome.

Sun 16th October, Friends of Peters Hill Church day

12 noon lunch, 1pm church service, 2pm AGM. All welcome at the Peters Hill church.

From the President

We had a very successful **tour of the Migration sites of Adelaide** on Sat 2nd April. 16 people attended for all or part of the day. We started at the Port Misery site where the early settlers (1837-1840) disembarked, before the Port Adelaide wharf was opened in late 1840. Gazing at the beautiful site today it is hard to imagine why they then called it a miserable sight. But the mangroves are all gone and the swamps have been transformed into lovely lakes.

At Port Adelaide we visited the clipper ship *City of Adelaide*, which carried passengers from England and Europe to South Australia for 23 years from 1864. It is a good example of the ships that brought our ancestors to SA and gives us a good picture of the life on board during the 4 month journey here. We were privileged to have Peter Christopher as our guide, as he is the director of the project to preserve the ship.

After an enjoyable lunch at Port Adelaide, we drove to the Torrens Lake Weir to see the site of the Kaurna Aboriginal settlement at which the German Lutheran missionaries, Schürmann, Teichelmann and Klose, lived and started a school for the children.

The next stop was the Klemzig Pioneer Cemetery, the site of the first German village in SA, founded in 1839. It later became a stopping-off place for Wendish and German arrivals before they moved on to other locations.

Finally we drove to Hope Valley Cemetery. Hope Valley and nearby Dry Creek were other locations where German and Wendish immigrants rested and learnt about this new country before moving on to other places. We inspected the graves of the 5 Wendish families (Buder, Kaske, Lokan, Rusken, Tannebring) buried there.

I encourage you to come to our **AGM** on Sunday 21st August. The business won't take long, and then we will be pleased to hear a talk about the **Duldig family** given by Leona Coleman. Other Wendish families who are connected include the Eckert and Schuppan families.

Lyall Kupke

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to the family and friends of these members who died recently:
Eddie Lohe (in 2021)

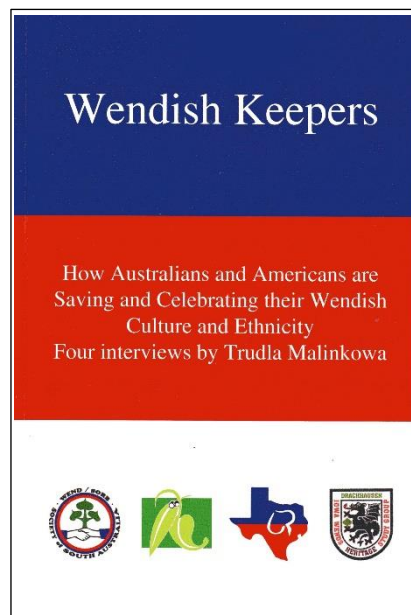
Wendish Keepers – a new book

Last year Trudla Malinkowa interviewed the leaders of the four Wendish societies in Australia and America about their aims, their history and activities. The interviews were published in a Sorb magazine.

The 4 societies are:

- Texas Wendish Heritage Society
- Iowa Wendish Study Group
- Wendish Heritage Society Australia
- Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia

The Texas Wendish Heritage Society has also published the interviews (in English). We have some copies for sale (see page 8 of the newsletter).



Here is a translation of the review for *Wendish Keepers*, published in the Wendish newspaper *Serbske Nowiny*, April 21, 2022:

Don't just exchange news!

When I held the booklet *Wendish Keepers* in my hands, I was very happy about what smiled at me there: a book on a Wendish topic in the colors of the Wendish flag. There is little uncertainty about the subject. The English-language brochure gives an insight into the efforts of four organisations from descendants of the Wendish emigrants in the 19th century. Among the four organisations are three clubs: one in the US and two in Australia. The fourth organisation is more of a research group.

What strikes you when reading Trudla Malinkowa's interviews with the leaders of the organisations is a completely new perspective on the Wends. It starts with the fact that there is pride in something that Malinkowa's interviewees saw already four generations ago. One finds joy in one's own history, in the small or larger proportion of Wendish blood. The joy and pride can touch the reader very much, as they show us (Lusatian) Wends again how much our normality is actually worth. The language we speak is so interesting for the people on the other side of the world that they honor it, that they do research and look for even the most distant kinship with Wendish families in Lusatia.

But what is also striking is the enthusiasm of activists for Wendish in Australia and the USA. The reader is presented with a picture of people who sacrifice their free time and energy to bring this small group of people, who do not play a major role in world politics, closer to others. We can't thank them enough for that! Their work strengthens the Wendish past and helps us in Lusatia not to forget the chapter of Wendish emigration to America and Australia.

And one more thing is noticeable when reading the interviews: the absolute seriousness with which they study the history of the Wendish ancestors in Lusatia. For example, when a research group in Iowa, USA, studies the entire church archives of Drachhausen, reconstructs the entire family tree of the village just to be able to tell people in North America that they come from the small Wendish village of Drachhausen, I am very fascinated and touched. It shows me something else that we (Lusatian) Wends take for granted. We know where we come from and who we are related to. Our roots are not thousands of kilometres away on another continent. The interest in everything Wendish, regardless of whether it is customs, traditions, food, language or costumes, is a logical result of this curiosity that asks about identity, which is not as easy to recognise in America or Australia as it is in our Lusatia.

In her publication, Trudla Malinkowa has achieved something really new: in four interviews, which are not too long, she is able to shed light on the situation of the Wendish descendants in the "New World". At no point does it seem that she would omit the aspect of effort. What should be particularly positively emphasised is that Malinkowa also gives her partners space for their own stories in the interviews. This booklet is not just a club

brochure, but also represents micro-biographies of four people who ensure that the Wendish roots in North America and Australia are not forgotten so quickly.

But you can also see that they are struggling with commitment, that they really have to make an effort. Each of Malinkowa's interviewees also has the opportunity to express wishes to the Wends in Lusatia - and there the reader should recognize that the Wends in Lusatia should feel encouraged to make contact with their relatives across the ocean. Shouldn't we (Lusatian) Wends support these activists and those interested in our people and give them a chance to deal even more intensively with the Wendish people? If we could do that, if maybe the Domowina would show more commitment to the Wendish descendants in America and Australia than just exchange news with them, then we could realise a cooperation of the Wendish people in Lusatia and in the whole world. May it be a hope and become a task for the future.

I venture the following summary: The booklet *Wendish Keepers* shows a new perspective. A new prospect for our people, for our history and perhaps also for our culture. I can imagine that among the (Lusatian) Wends nobody has heard of the famous "Wendish Noodles" that are produced in Texas. With this new perspective, however, we have also received a new mission: to strengthen relations among the Wends throughout the world, even if they cannot speak Wendish. We would like to thank Trudla Malinkowa for the publication and offer her a huge compliment for her work and effort!

Maximilian Gruber

Translation into German: Trudla Malinkowa

Translation into English: Weldon Mersiovsky and Margot Hendricks

Photos for our website

We are considering displaying some photos on our website www.wendsorbsociety.org.au
We will show 3 types of photos:

1. Churches and other buildings in villages that our ancestors came from in Lusatia.
2. People of the first generations to live in Australia
3. Tombstones in Australia of early Wendish settlers, especially if they show the names of their birthplace in Lusatia.

If you have appropriate photos you would like to exhibit, please attach them to an email to Lyall Kupke at kupkell@yahoo.com

This is a trial to see what happens. We may have to limit the number of photos eventually.

We hope this will be of interest and value to people looking to find out more about their Wendish heritage.

Here are examples of the 3 types of photos:



Church at Tauer



Martin & Anna Hondow



*Britza - Quorn cemetery
born at Jänschwalde & Tauer*

Our Library book collection

Over the years the Society has built up a collection of books which relate to the history and culture of the Wends (Sorbs) in Europe and Australia. These have been housed at the Lutheran Archives, 27 Fourth St, Bowden. They can be read there, or even borrowed.

In the collection there are books in 3 different languages: English, German and Wendish (Sorbian). We have recently listed them and put them in boxes according to the language.

We are publishing these lists gradually in our newsletters. We started with the English books (Box E1) in newsletter no. 61 (April 2021). Here is the next box of English books.

Box E2

- Hall, B, Noack, J, & Senff, H, 1989, *The Sorbs/Wends of Lusatia – The Unknown Immigrants*, Sumptibus Publications, Swansea, NSW.
- Friends of Peters Hill Church (compiler), 2014, *Memories of Peters Hill School*, Friends of Peters Hill Church, Riverton, SA.
- Kobelt, Irmgard, 1996, *Irmgard's Forebears and Folklore*, self-published, Hillier, SA [History of Pech and Wurst families]
- 2009, *Inlaid Patchwork in Europe from 1500 to the Present*, Dagmar Neuland-Kitzerow, Salwa Joram, & Erika Karasek, Berlin. [text in English and German]
- Graetz, Colin, 1982, *The White Wends of St Kitts. A story of the Biele Family tracing their history from their immigration in 1858 from Lusatia to South Australia for 124 years*, Biele Family Society, Sheoak Log, SA. [2 copies]
- Twartz, Harold E., 1983, *From Whence we Came. Twartz in Australia, Book 2*, self-published, Yorketown, SA.
- Colliver, P. Helen, 1982, *Freedom Found. A History of the Altus Family in Australia*, Altus Family Reunion Committee, Bethel, SA.
- Proeve, P.H., 1983, *From Cortnitz to South Australia. The Mickan Story. The story of their immigration and of their growth and spread throughout Australia*, Mickan Family Committee, Murray Bridge, SA.
- Mickan Family Committee, 1986, *From Cortnitz to South Australia. The Mickan Story. Supplement*, Mickan Family Committee, Murray Bridge, SA.
- Stone, Gerald, 2016, *Slav Outposts in Central European History. The Wends, Sorbs and Kashubs*, Bloomsbury, London, UK.
- Stone, Gerald, 1972, *The Smallest Slavonic Nation. The Sorbs of Lusatia*, Athlone Press, University of London, UK.
- Wukasch, Charles, 2008, *A Rock against Alien Waves. A History of the Wends*, Concordia University Press, Austin, Texas, USA.
- Peter, Renate, *Upper Lusatia, Landscape between the Spree and Neisse Rivers*, B&V Verlag, Dresden. [2 copies]
- Peter, Renate, *Bautzen, An Historic City in Upper Lusatia*, B&V Verlag, Dresden. [English edition]
- Peter, Renate, *Bautzen, An Historic City in Upper Lusatia*, B&V Verlag, Dresden. [English & American edition] [2 copies]
- Schiemann, Maria, 1998, *The Sorbs in Germany*, Stiftung für das sorbische Volk, Bautzen.
- Schiemann, Maria, 2000, *The Sorbs in Germany*, Stiftung für das sorbische Volk, Bautzen.
- Ladusch, Manfred & Schiemann, Maria, 2014, *The Sorbs in Germany*, Stiftung für das sorbische Volk, Bautzen.
- Malinkowa, Trudla, 2009, *Shores of Hope. Wends go Overseas*, Concordia University Press, Austin, Texas, USA.

Mystery Wendish book discovered in the Lutheran Archives

A previously unknown handwritten Wendish book has been recently discovered at the Lutheran Archives in South Australia. Historians and linguists at the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen, Germany, are currently examining it.

The story of its discovery is quite interesting. When the Victorians visited us in SA last year they went to the Lutheran Archives and were shown the range of old Wendish books that have been collected there. This was one of the books they saw. A photo of it was published in their newsletter with the report of their trip. When Gertrud Mahling (Trudla Malinkowa) saw the photo in the newsletter, she realised that she had not seen this particular book when she had visited the archives in 2018. So she asked for a copy and more information about it. Rachel Kuchel, the Director of Lutheran Archives, was very willing to scan the book for Gertrud.



Gertrud's daughter, Lubina Mahling, historian and linguist at the Sorbian Institute, together with her colleague Fabian Kaulfürst, are now examining the book. Here is her report:

‘This is an Upper Sorbian (Wendish) manuscript. On 107 of its pages, the book contains 27 Upper Sorbian handwritten Protestant church songs, the longest of which includes 20 verses. The very clean handwriting based on printed scripts is particularly remarkable.

‘Attached to the book is also a copy of the first issue of the Sorbian missionary newspaper edited by Handrij Palman, published in 1817, and as well a multi-page Sorbian print of chorales from 1802, which was not in the Sorbian Central Library's register.

‘It can be assumed that the book was created at the beginning of the 19th century and was taken to Australia by Sorbian (Wendish) emigrants. So far, the owner of the book could not be identified.

‘The handwritten songbook provides insight into the world of awakened Sorbs, who often translated and compiled songs and texts themselves for their home devotions – and eventually took them with them to the New World. At the same time, this handwritten book is an interesting testimony to Sorbian writing, for it stands at the boundary between handwritten and printed tradition.’

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
- *Five Centuries: The Wends and the Reformation* - \$40, 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

NEW book: Trudla Malinkowa, *Wendish Keepers* - \$30, plus \$10 postage
[The story of the four Wendish societies in Australia and America]

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 in 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, *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]

Wendish/Sorbian Flags (small, on a stick) \$5, plus \$3 postage

Calendars:

I will take orders for Calendars for 2023 – with scenes from Lusatia.

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

Cost = \$20, plus \$10 postage

Contact Ruth Walter, 43 Clifton St, Prospect SA 5082, (tel. 08 8269 7168, mobile 0435 211 606),
email: ruth.walter43@gmail.com

Please make cheques or money orders to Wend Sorb Society of South Australia,
or email Ruth for Direct Debit (EFT) details.

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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