

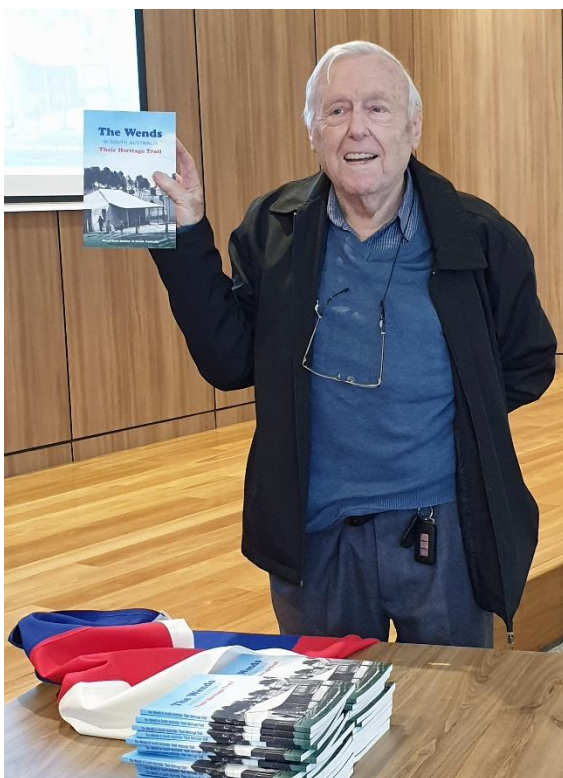


Heritage Trail book receives praise

The long-awaited book about the Wendish Pioneer Heritage Trail has been published and is receiving good reviews.

The book is a collaborative effort of members of the Wend/Sorb Society committee and it tells the story of the migration of Wends to SA in the mid-19th century.

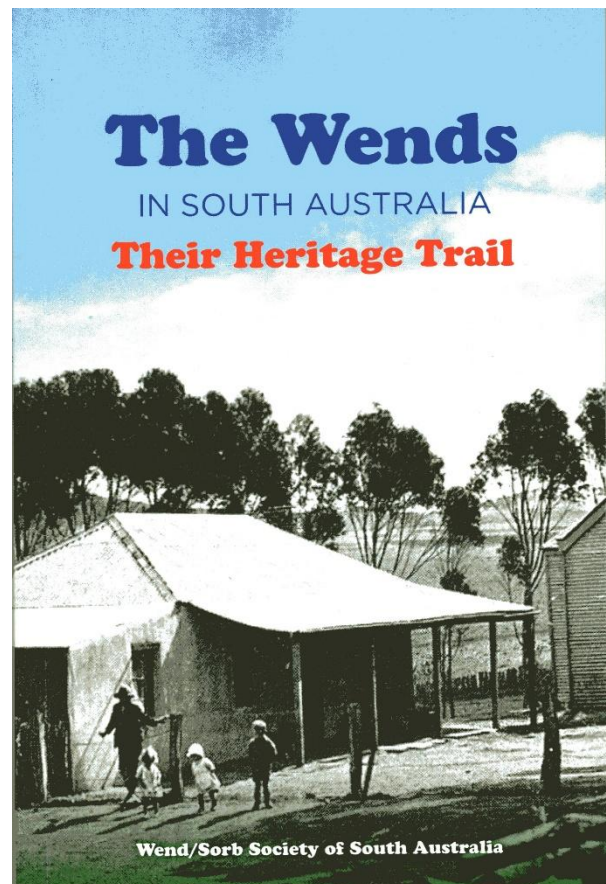
The book was released at the AGM in August 2025 and launched by Michael McDonnell, who was the instigator of the concept of the Heritage Trail back in 2006.



Michael McDonnell launching the book

At first the committee prepared six interpretive signs and in 2012 erected them at the six main Wendish settlement sites (Hope Valley, Rosedale, Ebenezer, Neukirch, St Kitts and Peters Hill).

Then a brochure was prepared to publicise the Trail and help people to locate the signs.



Finally, the committee worked on providing more information in a book (pictured above), which is now available.

It also includes:

- a detailed discussion of the history of the Wends in Europe and Australia
- shipping lists to South Australia
- maps showing the villages in Lusatia
- a list of Wendish family names in Australia
- a lot of good photos, some in colour.

The book has 96 pages.

Cost \$25, plus \$10 postage.

Contact Ruth Walter

email: ruth.walter43@gmail.com

(see Trudla Malinkowa's review on next page)

Trudla Malinkowa writes

[**Trudla Malinkowa** is a Sorbian/Wendish researcher and historian living in Bautzen, Germany. She is the author of a history of Wendish migration to Australia and the US, titled *Shores of Hope. Wends Go Overseas*. She visited Australia in 2018. After I sent her a copy of our new book, she replied with this article which was printed in the local Sorbian newspaper at Bautzen. Here is the English translation.]

In 2012, the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia established the Wendish Pioneer Heritage Trail, a memorial trail that guides visitors to the six most significant Wendish settlements in the state. At that time, an interpretive sign was installed in each location, providing information in words and pictures about the Wends in Lusatia and their migration to South Australia. Now, the society has published an accompanying booklet entitled *The Wends in South Australia. Their Heritage Trail*, which contains more detailed information on the topic.

The A5-format booklet comprises 96 pages. The main section is dedicated to the six Wendish settlements, all located north of the South Australian capital, Adelaide, which are Hope Valley, Rosedale, Ebenezer, Neukirch, St Kitts, and Peters Hill. It describes the early history of these settlements and includes a list of Wendish families who lived there. It also contains current tourist information. The reader learns which traces of Wendish culture can be seen in the area today and where shops and restaurants are located nearby. Sources listed after each section allow interested readers to delve deeper into the topic.

In most of the settlements presented, Wends from Upper and Lower Lusatia lived alongside Germans. The dominance of the German language in public life and numerous mixed marriages led to the rapid Germanization of the Wends. Only two settlements were somewhat of an exception: the Upper Wendish Ebenezer and the Lower Wendish Peters Hill.

Ebenezer was founded in 1852 by pious Wends from villages in the eastern Bautzen region of Upper Lusatia. Already in their old homeland, they had gathered as "Wendish brothers" in religious circles before eventually emigrating together. In their new homeland, they endeavored to continue their religious and national traditions, which they managed to do for some time with a Wendish preacher and a Wendish teacher.

The most significant Lower Wendish settlement, Peters Hill, was established in the mid-1850s when numerous families from various villages from the Cottbus area in Lower Lusatia settled there. For years, they held lay devotions and religious services in their native language, using religious books they had brought from home.

The opening chapter of the booklet is dedicated to the history and language of the Wends in Lusatia and their immigration to South Australia. Chapters at the end include shipping lists of Wendish passengers and a list of Wendish family names in Australia. Geographical maps as well as historical and contemporary photographs enrich the publication.

The main aim of the publication—as stated in the preface—is to inform readers in South Australia about the Wends. The focus is primarily on their descendants, who over the generations have forgotten their national origins and often consider themselves German. The booklet provides them with a concise and clear overview of their family history, which has its roots in Slavic Lusatia. At the same time, this well-compiled material enriches the existing literature on the history of Wendish emigration and the traces that the Lusatian Wends left in South Australia to this day.

The publication is the result of a long-term collaboration between several committee members of the Wend/Sorb Society of South Australia, under the leadership of its president, Lyall Kupke. Those interested can order the booklet for the Wendish Pioneer Heritage Trail from him by email (president@wendsorbsociety.org.au).

Trudla Malinkowa

Coming Events

Sat 2nd May German Heritage Seminar

– Moving On: Mapping German settlement trails

This will examine the spread of German settlement in SA in the 19th century.

At Langmeil Lutheran Church, Tanunda (9.30 am – 4.30 pm). Cost: \$50 (includes lunches).

Part of the SA History Festival. To register, contact Chris Leske (0428 337 132, ejleske@internode.on.net)

Sun 24th May, 2 pm Talk: The Laucke family – an Australian success story

Friedrich Laucke came from the Wendish area of Germany to SA in 1895 and soon got involved in the flour milling industry. Expansion by later generations made the Laucke product a respected name in Australia. His son Condor also made a great contribution to parliament and government. Mark Laucke and his sister, Janet O'Brien, tell their family's story.

This is our SA History Festival presentation.

At the Glynde Lutheran Homes hall (22 Avenue Rd, Glynde). All welcome.

Sun 21st June, 2 pm Talk: Recent Visit to Lusatia

Lorraine Kempf went on the Easter trip to Germany last year and we heard about it at last year's meeting. She will tell us some more about it and show some more pictures.

At the Glynde Lutheran Homes hall (22 Avenue Rd, Glynde). All welcome.

Sun 9th August, 2 pm Annual General Meeting

Followed by an illustrated talk by Leona Coleman about the new book, *Sorbian Monuments* (see last newsletter).

At the Glynde Lutheran Homes hall (22 Avenue Rd, Glynde). All welcome.

Sun 18th October Peters Hill day

The Friends of Peters Hill Church have their annual get together and AGM.

Lunch at 12 noon, church service at 1.30 pm, Annual General Meeting at 2.30 pm.

For more information, contact the Secretary, Chris Fisher (mobile 0417 837 709)

ELECTIONS:

The following office-bearers were elected at the AGM (10 Aug 2025):

President: Lyall Kupke

Vice-President: Brian Hennig

Secretary: Pauline Burger

Assistant Secretary: Ruth Walter

Treasurer: Leona Coleman

Extra members: Marie Brazier, Lorraine Kempf, Jenny Sorell, Heather Watkins, John Zwar.

Sympathy

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

Ian Doecke

Richard Noack

Christine Weckert (Qld)

Wendish visitors from Werben

It has been a pleasure to welcome **Anna Hotzan** and **Vera Guttke** while they travelled around Australia for 5 months.



Vera and Anna

These two Wendish girls, from the Lower Lusatian village of Werben in the Spreewald region, planned to visit Australia once they completed their Year 12 exams mid-year. They contacted us earlier in the year and offered to share their Wendish culture with us.

They also wanted to find out about the Wends in Australia, so we were pleased to show them around the Wendish areas of South Australia.

Arriving early in September they spent the first two weeks with Lyall & Lois Kupke. As well as seeing the sights of Adelaide, they were taken to the historical sites of Klemzig, Hope Valley and Hahndorf. At the Lutheran Archives they saw copies of old Wendish Bibles, hymn books and sermon books, which had been brought to Australia by the first Wendish immigrants.

They attended the Royal Adelaide Show and saw the typical Australian events of sheep shearing, sheep dog trials and the wood-chopping contest. At Cleland Wildlife Park they were introduced to Australian kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, Tasmanian devils, dingoes, snakes etc. They also took a day tour to Kangaroo Island.

Geoff and Enis Saegenschnitter hosted them for the next two weeks and took them around the Barossa Valley, the Adelaide Hills and to Peters Hill.

Back in Adelaide they stayed with Ruth Walter, who took them to some galleries and also arranged for them to ride bikes with her nephew along the bike trail to the sea.

While in Adelaide they presented their talk about their family, their hometown of Werben and their Wendish culture. The large audience was delighted as they showed a Wendish costume and talked about it.



In six weeks in SA, they had many Australian experiences and learnt a great deal about the history of the Wends here.

Next, Lyall and Lois took them to Victoria and handed them over to Betty and Colin Huf, who showed them the Grampians, the Ocean Road and the Wendish areas around Tarrington.

At the annual Wendish banquet at Ballarat Anna and Vera repeated their presentation to the Victorians. They then presented their Wendish costume to the Victorian Wendish Heritage Society.

While in Melbourne, Anna and Vera were guests on the German branch of SBS radio. It was a 20-minute interview, and Anna began by introducing herself in the Sorbian language – which she had studied for her Year 12 exams, but does not speak at home. You can listen to the broadcast by googling *SBS podcast Wendish harvest queens*

After Victorian members showed them around Melbourne, they flew to Cairns to experience

Continued on next page

tropical Australia and the Great Barrier Reef. Over the next weeks they slowly travelled down the eastern coast via Brisbane to Sydney.

From Sydney they travelled via Canberra to Wodonga, where they stayed with a distant relative in the Jarick family. At Bethel NSW they visited the grave of their ancestor Christian Jarick, who came to Australia. Meeting other Jarick relatives at Bethel was especially exciting for them.



With Jarick relatives at Bethel, NSW

Before they left us, some folk in Melbourne took them to Broken Hill to show them the outback of Australia. They flew home in mid-February.

They had an unforgettable time in Australia and send thanks to all who welcomed and helped them.



Wendish musical

A musical about the Wendish emigrants in the 19th century has been written and performed in Upper Lusatia. Titled **Won do swěta (Out into the world)**, it had its world premiere on 18 October 2025 at Radibor. It was written by Esther Undisz, and translated by Měrana Cušcyna.

It tells the story of the first group of Wendish emigrants from Lower Lusatia, who arrived in Adelaide SA in November 1848, after five months at sea. They were seeking religious freedom and prosperity – a better future for their children. They had sold everything they owned in their Lusatian homeland and followed the sometimes legendary reports of the promised land overseas. Then it relates the story of the group of Upper Wends who travelled to Texas, USA in 1854.

The musical is performed in the Upper Sorbian language, with a simultaneous German translation. It was also performed at Dreikretscham and Crostwitz in Oct-Nov 2025.

Ebenezer Wends photo



In the new book, *The Wends in South Australia*, there is this photo of 6 men who emigrated to South Australia in 1851 (see page 11). Trudla Malinkowa has made a detailed study of this photo and her article is published in the latest *Journal of Friends of Lutheran Archives*, No. 35 (Dec 2025).

One man is identified as Johann Dallwitz, the first teacher at Ebenezer. Johann Zwar is also possibly on the photo. Can you recognise any of the others as your ancestors? If so, please let me know.

Copies of the Journal are available from Friends of Lutheran Archives (FoLA), 27 Fourth St, Bowden SA 5007 for \$15 (\$19 posted). Email lutheran.archives@lca.org.au

Tours to Lusatia

A much anticipated meeting to hear members speak about recent visits to Lusatia finally arrived on 6 July. Lyall introduced the three presenters to entertain us with memories of their trips.

To begin, **Jane Lutt** first gave details of her Konzag ancestors who came from Werben. They sailed on the *Godeffroy* from Hamburg to South Australia in 1854. Jane's slides covered her trip in June 2024 to Lusatia, via Bremen and its Museum of Migration.

After visiting Cottbus, Jane spent time exploring Werben, the home town of the Konzags. She showed views of the interior of the church where her ancestors would have worshipped. One slide showed a statue of an angel raised high above. This statue was a "Baptismal Angel", lowered for baptisms, as the angel held the baptismal font.



Although the church register included details of ancestors' baptisms and weddings, Jane's great-great-grandfather Friedrich was baptised in the church at Papitz. (One of my Dalitz ancestors was a godparent!)

At Cottbus, Jane visited its Wendish Haus and museum, where we saw costumes, elegant lace and musical instruments. An interesting link to Australia was the statue there of the explorer Ludwig Leichhardt, who came from the area.

After enjoying lunch at Lübbenau in the Spreewald, Jane had seen the yellow punt which delivers mail via the Spreewald canals. In the local open-air museum, we saw images of typical farms of the Spreewald, followed by scenes from Jane's punt tour on the canals.

Jane ended her talk by following the family history here in South Australia. They bought land at Mallala and succeeding generations have continued to farm there. We saw an impressive range of their farm machinery including harvesters and historic tractors.

Next, **Lorraine Kempf** and **Jenny Sorell** combined to describe their Easter trip to Germany and Lusatia in 2025. A group of Australians, led by Betty and Colin Huf, travelled in a small bus. On the English Channel, they saw the white cliffs of Dover. Once in Germany, they visited the Wittenberg city church where Martin Luther often preached, and which holds famous paintings by Cranach. On Palm Sunday their group went to the Castle Church, where in 1517 Luther nailed his 95 theses.

On Easter Sunday morning in Hochkirch, the group had an early start with singing, coffee and cakes, then breakfast. The church service was in German, with children singing and performing.

In addition to slides, Jenny and Lorraine included a video of the "Easter Riders". Horsemen ride through villages, their horses decorated with white bows and blue saddles. This Catholic tradition now includes confirmed Lutheran men. They have a green wreath when it is their first time as a rider, and one young man delighted us with his big smile. The horses and riders made a big impression on both Jenny and Lorraine – and we who enjoyed the video.



We also saw slides of the Jänschwalde Choir with the women wearing costumes held together with pins, with felted skirts and elaborate headwear apparently kept in shape by cardboard inserts.

Continued on next page

The group then enjoyed a Kahn (punt) ride on the Spree River canals, passing fish traps and haystacks looking like tents built on top of a frame. The area is famous for its gherkins.



Colin & Betty Huf, with Lorraine Kempf on a punt

Other locations visited were Klemzig, where David Zweck conducted a special service, and Wartburg Castle where Luther translated the New Testament from Greek to German. The tour visited the Bach House and in Neuendettelsau the grave of Johannes Flierl who was a missionary in PNG. It then included a Rhine cruise, the Concorde museum, and World War I memorials at Menin Gate, Ypres and Villers Bretonneux. An impressive coverage of the sites of Lusatia and some other parts of Germany.

Our thanks to the three presenters for entertaining and educating us by sharing their insights and views around Lusatia from their travels. We always look forward to hearing more about the land of our ancestors.

Pauline Burger

Margaret Mickan OAM

We congratulate one of our members, Margaret Mickan, for recently receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Margaret Mickan has been awarded an OAM for her lifetime of service to Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley in Western Australia. She was closely involved with Lutheran Bible Translators and played a significant role in translating the Kriol Bible in collaboration with Indigenous Kriol speakers.

Margaret writes: “The area where Kriol is spoken is in the Kimberley where I worked in language awareness, literacy and Scripture Engagement. On moving to the NT, I was based mainly in Darwin, but related to the peoples in an area radiating out from Katherine. At that time the New Testament was completed and at the request of Kriol speakers, I facilitated and helped train the team who translated the Old Testament.”

The project culminated in the dedication of the Kriol Holi Baibul in Katherine in 2007.



Who do you think you are?

For many years this SBS television program has been providing us with fascinating stories of many people's ancestors.

Now we have been told that a Wendish pioneer at Peters Hill will be featured in one of the episodes in the new series to be aired in May. The identity is a secret. So watch out for the new series. Coming soon!

For Sale

Books:

- *The Sorbs of Germany* - \$10, plus \$3 postage
- Korall & Schwikart, *Journey through the Spree Forest* (with lovely pictures) - \$35, plus \$10 postage
- Schulenburg, *Wendish Folklore. Its Legends, Traditions and Customs* - \$50, plus \$10 postage
- Schneeweis, *Festivals and Folk Customs of the Sorbs (Wends)* - \$50, 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) - **Sold out!!**

Also: Trudla Malinkowa, *Wendish Keepers* - \$30, plus \$10 postage
 [The story of the four Wendish societies in Australia and America]
 Trudla Malinkowa, *Ufer der Hoffnung* - \$20, plus \$10 postage
 [This is the German version of *Shores of Hope*]

NEW book:

The Wends in South Australia. Their Heritage Trail - \$25, plus \$10 postage

Music 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

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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