

The Friends of Westgarthtown is nominating Hehr's Pine Park farm complex for inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register. **Robert Wuchatsch** reports.



HEHR'S PINE PARK FARM WOLLERT

Hehr's milking shed (1984).

Hehr's historic bluestone homestead and farm buildings at 290 Epping Road, Wollert recently changed hands, having being sold in late 2009 by Investa to Stockland. This property, located on the east side of Epping Road (High Street) between Harvest Home and Lehmanns Roads, lies within an Urban Growth Boundary and Stockland intends

to develop the adjacent farm land for residential purposes.

Although the City of Whittlesea has advised that 'Hehr's Farm is not under threat and that its future heritage retention has been addressed in the broader planning permits relating to the subdivision and development of the land', most of the surrounding dry stone walls have recently been demolished. Included among these was a wonderful old raised wall along Epping Road built to protect horses from the prevailing winds. Many of the elms and pepper trees planted by the Hehr family to provide shade around the house and outbuildings have also been removed.

Given its historic importance to the development of dairying and horse breeding in the City of Whittlesea, the Friends of Westgarthtown has decided to nominate Hehr's Pine Park farm complex for inclusion on the Victorian

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RESEARCH

Heritage Register.

Christian and Dorothea Hehr, along with their children Christian Jr., Jacob, Caroline and Catherine, emigrated from Leutenbach in Wurttemberg, Germany aboard the ship *Electric* and arrived in Melbourne on 25 December 1856.

Christian Hehr was living and working as a gardener at East Brunswick when he was naturalised as a Victorian citizen on 14 March 1860. In 1866, when he purchased 76 acres of land at Wollert (Section 11, Parish of Wollert), he was listed as living on the Merri Creek at Pentridge (Coburg).

On their land at Wollert, Christian and Dorothea established a dairy farm, which they and their descendants operated for over 100 years. Dorothea, aged 69, died on 3 February 1888 and Christian, aged 85, died on 22 July 1892 and both are buried at the nearby Epping Cemetery. The property passed to their son Jacob and his wife Magdalene (née Wuchatsch), who had been running the farm since their marriage on 16 February 1886.

Magdalene bore Jacob seven sons — Charles, William, Henry, Ernest, Jack, Rupert and Walter. Although Walter died of influenza in 1904 aged 6, his elder brothers all survived to adulthood and lived and worked on or nearby the farm, which soon became known as Pine Park.

Jacob died on 9 July 1903 aged 54 and Magdalene on 20 November 1928 aged 73 and were buried at Epping beside his parents. Their sons continued farming Pine Park and adjacent properties they had acquired, some remaining all their lives and others until they married and moved away.

Below from left: Hehr's homestead (1999), a stallion box (1999), Hehr brothers and draught horses (1921) and the prize winning Fine View Favour (1929).

Top right: Jacob and Magdalene Hehr (1886).



In 1919 Henry and Ernie formed a partnership known as Hehr Bros. In 1921, the *Weekly Times* carried a report by *Casein* on dairying at Wollert.

“Mixed farming is carried on, and the activities of Messrs Hehr Bros. are being profitably devoted to milk production, the cultivation of hay crops, and the breeding of draught horses. This year the Messrs Hehr stacked nearly 300 tons of hay. Most of it is chaffed and carted to the city markets [horsefeed]. With an oil engine and cutting plant there is no difficulty in cutting 15 tons of chaff a day ... The rich, dark, volcanic soil goes down a great depth and, like the alluvial land at Bacchus Marsh, there does not appear to be any possibility of exhausting the fertility of it. With a rainfall averaging between 30 and 35 inches, and little to be feared from droughty conditions, it will readily be understood that mixed farming at Wollert is profitable and more than ordinarily reliable. On Messrs Hehr Bros. farm, where 150 acres are generally cultivated for hay crops each year, the land is ploughed during March and April and the paddocks are seeded before the beginning of May. This year, owing to dry weather, seeding is later than usual. A mixture of oats and wheat is sown at the rate of two bushels to the acre, and with the seeds a cwt. of superphosphate an acre is drilled in.”

The Hehr Bros. partnership also became noted for its prize winning draught and Clydesdale horses. From 1920 they dominated at the Whittlesea Show. On 20 November 1925, the *Evelyn and Hurstbridge Advertiser* noted that:



“The draughts all round were a fine collection, the principal prize takers were the Hehr Brothers, who won most of the leading honors, including the champion ribbons to stallion and brood mare.”

In 1926, they won seven of the nine draught horse events, including Show Champion. The partnership was also successful at the Royal Melbourne and Kilmore Shows. The partnership was dissolved in 1933 when Henry married and moved away, but both brothers continued their interest in breeding and showing heavy horses, as did their brothers Jack and Rupert. It was Ernie, however, who continued breeding and exhibiting the longest. In 1959 the *Whittlesea Post* noted that he had been showing horses at the Royal Melbourne Show for 50 years. The *Weekly Times* reported:

“Mr. E. Hehr, of Wollert, brought out both champion and reserve stallions. Craigie Superb, a 7 year old, full of quality and breed character, won the top honour. Runner up was a 3 year old colt, Craigie Leader, recently imported from Scotland. Mr Clift [judge] praised the owner for importing such a fine horse. He could see it as a future champion when it was a little older and was fully acclimatized.”



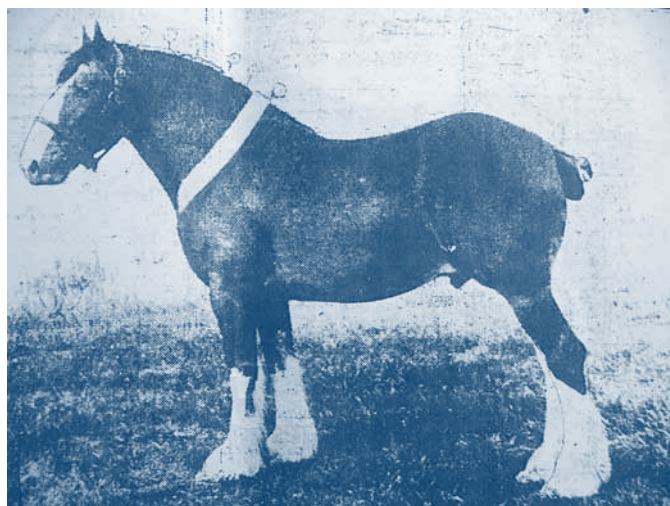
Ernie walked his horses to and from the Whittlesea, Kilmore and Royal Melbourne Shows. He would leave in the early hours of the morning to arrive in time to prepare and exhibit his invariable prize winners. Many of his sales, to buyers in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, were to customers who had seen his horses successfully exhibited in shows.

Following Ernie's death in 1974, Pine Park was purchased by long time friend and neighbour, Allan Cotchin, who generally leased the farmhouse and buildings to tenants with an interest in horses. Several years ago he sold the property for subdivision.

In the City of Whittlesea's 1991 Heritage Study, Pine Park farm was described as:

“one of the most complete farms to survive from the nineteenth century in the City of Whittlesea. Not only are there a large number of farm buildings constructed here they are generally of the local bluestone which has ensured a long life. The complex of buildings and connecting pathways has a village quality not unlike the German farm towns from which Christian and Dorothea had emigrated.

... Hehr's farm comprises two phases of farm development. The earlier phase is based around



the dairy industry and includes the house, dairy, milking shed and possibly the shearing shed. Of particular interest is the milking shed, which remains today little altered since construction. Facing east, it occupies an excavation in the side of a gently sloping story rise with the result that the west wall appears half buried in the hillside. Of bluestone and hand hewn timber it remains structurally sound, although disused for many years, extensive bluestone paving completes the yard outside.

... The house is a simple building although extensively altered internally and added to at the rear it is possible to understand the relationship between the house and the outbuildings ...

The second major phase of development is represented by the extensive stabling and particularly tall drystone walls fencing the small paddocks facing Epping Road. These buildings and features are part of the Clydesdale horse breeding programme. Some of these buildings are remarkably intact including timber stalls, feeding boxes and bluestone flooring with elaborate drainage channels. This horse breeding facility is remarkable for the way in which the local materials have been used. Further evidence of this is seen in the extensive drystone walling to paddocks which stretches out across the landscape to adjoining properties to the west and south.

... As a complex Hehr's Pine Park Farm illustrates early German building practices, the manner in which the resources of the new land were put to use, and both the dairy and horse breeding industries, the latter providing an essential product for farms throughout the district. It is historically significant on a regional level for all these aspects and architecturally significant on a state level for the remarkable intactness of the structures and related networks of the dairy and horse breeding farms."

The Friends of Westgarthtown believe the preservation and future restoration of Hehr's Pine Park farmhouse and farm buildings will enable future generations of Australians to better understand the development of dairy farming and horse breeding in the City of Whittlesea during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



Some of the many prizes awarded to the Hehr brothers for their draught & Clydesdale horses.

Joshua Hammond: a non-German Westgarthtown resident

Few non-Germans lived at Westgarthtown during the nineteenth century, but one was the Englishman Joshua Hammond, who rented Maria Timm's 15 acre farm and cottage from 1871-93.

Joshua and Sarah (née Moon) Hammond were married on 6 June 1842 at Southwark in London. Joshua, a blacksmith, aged 28, arrived in Melbourne with his wife Sarah (30), and children Sarah (5), Eliza (3) and George (1), aboard the *Chowringhee* in July 1852.

By the late 1850s, the Hammond family was living north of Melbourne at Woodstock, where three sons – James (1858), Henry (1860) and Charles (1864) were born. Although Joshua's occupation on Charles' birth certificate was given as blacksmith, he was described as a farmer in November 1863 when he gave evidence in a court case in Melbourne. Directories during the late 1860s also list him as a farmer.

In 1870, the Hammonds moved to Thomastown, where they rented a house and 2½ acres of land from John Devine. The following year they moved to Westgarthtown, where over the next 22 years, Joshua's occupation was variously given as carpenter, carter, gardener and farmer. As he could not have supported his family from the 15 acres they rented from Maria Timm, Joshua supplemented his income by working off the farm. During the 1980s, Henry Ziebell recalled having been told as a child that Hammond had for many years carted Westgarthtown's milk for Andrew Kreitling, who had a dairy at Carlton.

Henry Hammond attended Thomastown State School from 1870-74 and Charles from 1870-77.

Sarah died at Westgarthtown on 8 November 1880, aged 60, and was buried at Epping. Andrew Kreitling and a neighbour, George Nebel, acted as undertakers. Almost twelve months later, on 30 October 1881, Joshua married Madeline Blanchard, a housekeeper from North Melbourne.

At the time of Maria Timm's death in 1890 (see Friends of Westgarthtown News Vol 13, No. 2), Hammond was paying £15 rent a year. Maria's land at Westgarthtown then passed to her son Frederick, who in 1893 sold it to a neighbour, Charles Wuchatsch. Joshua Hammond then disappears from the Epping Shire rate books and nothing more is known about him.

More new Epping North street names



Further to our last newsletter, pictured are several more of the new streets in Epping North named after the City of Whittlesea's early German settlers etc. More about this interesting new development in our next newsletter.

Johann and Johanna Rosel

Johann Rosel (c. 1803-97) was a Wend from Pielitz, six kilometres south-east of Bautzen, in Saxony. He arrived in Melbourne from Hamburg aboard the *Pribislaw* in February 1850, with his wife Johanna and four children. One infant child, Ann, died at the Immigrants Depot, shortly after arrival in Melbourne.

Rosel's sister, Annie, also travelled to Australia on the *Pribislaw* with her husband Johann Zimmer and their children. The Rosels settled on ten acres at Westgarthtown (Lots 7 & 8, Section 25, Parish of Keelbundora) purchased on their behalf by Johann Zimmer, who also settled nearby with his family.

Magdalena, one of Johann and Johanna Rosel's daughters, later told her granddaughter, Lena Pamett, about her life as a child in Saxony. In 1976 Lena wrote the following (edited) notes:

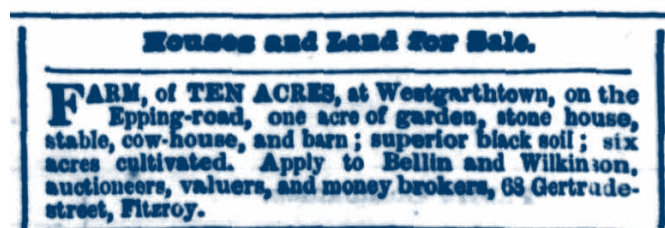
“ ... The Rosels had a two storeyed house in Pielitz near Bautzen near Dresden. They used to grow their crops on the flat land using their cows to plough with. Several cows had a large room on the ground floor of their house and the bedrooms were above it and kept warm in winter. The kitchen housed the birds and hens on the rafters in winter. They used to spin cotton from flax that grew and the father would make wooden barrels on winter evenings. A large apple tree grew up by the top windows and the children would reach out and pick a ripe apple in season.

Wheat was reaped by hand scythe and hand threshed. The father would take a bag on the wheel barrow over the hills to town and get it ground into flour and Magdalena his daughter a little girl would help pull up hill with a rope in front. They also took flax and spun thread to be woven into cloth. Magdalena could spin the finest cotton ...

Johann Rosel was one of the Wends annoyed by fellow *Pribislaw* passenger Carl Hoehne's constant complaints and his negative reports back to Germany about life in Australia. Hoehne himself wrote in 1851 that 'Rosel has warned me that he will throw stones at me.' Andreas

Albert, another Wend, wrote in 1852 that Rosel was 'poorly clothed, but he would not change with his brother in Weissig [in Saxony].'

Rosel was naturalized as a Victorian citizen on 31 January 1853. On 16 February 1864, Johann Rosel Jr. paid Johann Zimmer £28, enabling him to take formal title to his family's land at Westgarthtown. On 16 June 1866, the land was sold to a neighbour Johann Gottlob Siebel for £200 and Rosel and his wife moved to Wollert, where their son Johann Rosel Jr. had purchased a 79 acre property on the south-west corner of Epping and Craigieburn Roads. Their two daughters – Magdalena and Maria – had also settled at Wollert, following their marriages to Christian Bindt and Carl Ewert, who established dairy farms there.



The Argus, 19 February 1866.

In 1871, Johann Rosel Jr. sold his farm at Wollert and purchased another in Church Street, Doncaster, where Johanna Rosel died of peritonitis on 15 November 1874, aged 70. She is buried in the Waldau Cemetery.

In 1888, Johann Rosel moved to Flynn's Creek in Gippsland where his son had bought a property and intended to go into fruitgrowing, as he had done at Doncaster. Johann Jr. married three times – to Ernestine Aumann, Julianna Keicher and Anne Willis – and raised a large family.

Johann Rosel died aged 94 at his son's farm at Tyers in Gippsland on 25 November 1897 and is buried at Traralgon. At the time of his death, he was stated to have been 'a smoker from youth and has been a very heavy drinker.' For some years prior to his death he had been cared for by his granddaughter Emma Rosel. Her father, Johann Rosel Jr., is believed to have drowned trying to cross the flooded LaTrobe River in 1901 while taking his butter to market.

Rosel descendants visit ancestor's land at Westgarthtown



Lindsay Burnip is a Rosel descendant, the grandson of one of Johann Rosel Jr.'s sons who moved to New Zealand, where other Rosel descendants still live.

Lindsay and his wife Bernice visited Westgarthtown on 15 April 2010 from their home in South Australia. Robert Wuchatsch showed them through Ziebell's Farmhouse and the Lutheran church and cemetery reserve as well as pointing out the area of land once owned by Johann Rosel.

Lindsay and Bernice standing at Westgarthtown with Johann Rosel's former land over the creek at Tramoo Street in the background.

Wendish Heritage Society Australia

Do you have Wendish ancestry? The Wends (also known as Sorbs) are a Slavic people who spoke a Slavic language — Wendish or Sorbian. The Wends live in Lusatia, an area in eastern Germany which during the mid-nineteenth century was divided between Saxony and Prussia. Five families who settled at Westgarthtown were Wendish – Graff, Grutzner, Rosel, Wuchatsch and Zimmer.

The Wendish Heritage Society Australia researches and promotes the Wendish/Sorbian and Germanic heritage and family history in Australia. Its meeting room and research centre is located at the Ivanhoe Lutheran Church's meeting room, 27 Livingstone Street, Ivanhoe, Victoria and is open on the first Sunday each month from February-November from 1.30 – 5.30 pm. The Wendish Heritage Society Australia's postal address is PO Box 307, Heidelberg, Victoria 3084. For further details see www.wendishheritage.org.au

Thomastown Lutheran Church Services

Services are held on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at 2.30 pm at the Thomastown Lutheran Church, German Lane, Lalor. For further details, contact Irma Hatty on 03 9338 9064 or see the Calvary Lutheran Church website at www.calvarychurch.com.au

Visiting Ziebell's Farmhouse

Ziebell's Farmhouse is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, 1–4 pm. For enquiries, call 03 9464 1805 or enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au

Tours can be organised for groups of ten or more people. For information and bookings contact Tatiana Joukoff on 03 9464 5062 or tatianajoukoff@hotmail.com

Friends of Lutheran Archives

Do you have Lutheran ancestors? Have you checked with the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide to see whether they hold information about your relatives? Would you like to join the Friends of Lutheran Archives and help support the collection and preservation of important Australian and New Zealand Lutheran archival material.

For further details, contact Lutheran Archives

27 Fourth Street, Bowden South Australia 5007.

Tel/Fax: 08 8340 4009.

Email: lutheran.archives@lca.org.au

Westgarthtown's 160th Anniversary

This year is Westgarthtown's 160th Anniversary and celebrations are planned for Sunday 21 November 2010 as part of the City of Whittlesea's Cultural Heritage Program 2010.

The Friends of Westgarthtown and the City of Whittlesea will host an afternoon of celebrations, commencing at Ziebell's Farmhouse at 1.00 pm. After the launch of the 160th celebrations, the updated Heritage Trail Brochure and the Ziebell Farmhouse Garden Guide, guided heritage trail tours will start at Ziebell's Farmhouse at 2.00 pm and 3.00 pm. Afternoon tea will be provided.

During the afternoon, the Friends of Westgarthtown will demonstrate how the new eHive Museum Catalogue System can be resourced and used. The eHive System has been developed by the Friends of Westgarthtown with the assistance of a grant from Museum Australia's Building Better Museums Program and volunteers from Heritagecare.

Further details will be available once the Cultural Heritage Program 2010 is finalised, printed and posted in May.



Visitor's to 2008's Cultural Heritage Program enjoy a tour conducted by Tatiana Joukoff: Ziebell's Farmhouse (top) and the Lutheran Church (bottom)

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Westgarthtown is the oldest and most intact German/Wendish settlement in Victoria. Established in March 1850, it celebrates its 160th Anniversary in 2010.

The Thomastown Lutheran Church at Westgarthtown is the second oldest surviving Lutheran Church building in Australia and the oldest still used as the principal worship centre of a Lutheran congregation.

Heritage Victoria has included the Lutheran Church, Cemetery and Reserve; and Graff's, Siebel's, Wuchatsch's and Ziebell's houses on its Heritage Register, recognising their outstanding heritage value and providing legislative protection for the future.

Ziebell's Farmhouse is Victoria's oldest German immigrant building.

Siebel's Farmhouse, erected in 1860, is the birthplace of Albert Siebel, who in 1934 established the Pura Dairy at Preston, to retail Westgarthtown's milk. Pura has now developed into a leading national Australian brandname.

Wuchatsch's Farmhouse is believed to be the oldest house in Melbourne to have been constructed, owned and continually occupied by the same family.