

# Elements

OF WESTGARTHTOWN



**Pine**

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AN APPRECIATION

## The pine trees of Westgarthtown

BY JOHN BORRACK

By the late 19th century the landscape of Westgarthtown was quite open, with few tall trees. The settlers responded with pines.

**P**ine trees (*Pinus Radiata*), once proliferated at Westgarthtown. They were at the height of their maturity in the mid twentieth century. They existed mainly on the perimeter of the cemetery, in diverse woodlots at Ziebell's and around their farm which itself came to be known as "The Pines". Planted by the early German pioneers

they evoked, for those denizens, memories of their homeland.

As an evergreen species, the pines served as a decorative attribute to the stark open landscape and as a shelter and windbreak from the fierce summer and winter gusts, so characteristic of Victorian weather.

There is something beguiling about pine trees and their sympathetic grouping within the

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THE PINES TREES OF WESTGARTHTOWN

Westgarthtown Lutheran Cemetery. Photo: David Johns.

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landscape. Memories of my early days at Westgarthtown are redolent of pine trees. The vernacular architecture which evolved from the use of ubiquitous bluestone (basalt), reflecting German traditions in conjunction with the planting of the pines, resulted in a sense of place quite different to any settlement I had ever seen.

To wander through a copse of pines or along a treed lane can certainly be an elevating experience. The whispering or sougling of gentle breezes through the trees, the scattered shadows on the sienna carpet of pine needles, the carolling of magpies, (still nesting there today) and the pungent and resinous odour of pine needles after rain, can all effect a remedial and pacifying state of mind on any visitor.

Today, sadly, many of the pines I knew have been removed or have died. Many still abound along the drystone walls that surround the cemetery. Writers, poets and artists have long expressed the beauty and remarkable character of the pine tree.

Respighi in his musical

tone poem, *The Pines of Rome* pays tribute to the aesthetic significance they have always held in that eternal city.

However, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley should have the last word on pine trees:

*We paused amid the pines that stood  
The giants of the waste-  
Tortured, by storms, to shapes as rude  
As serpents interlaced;*

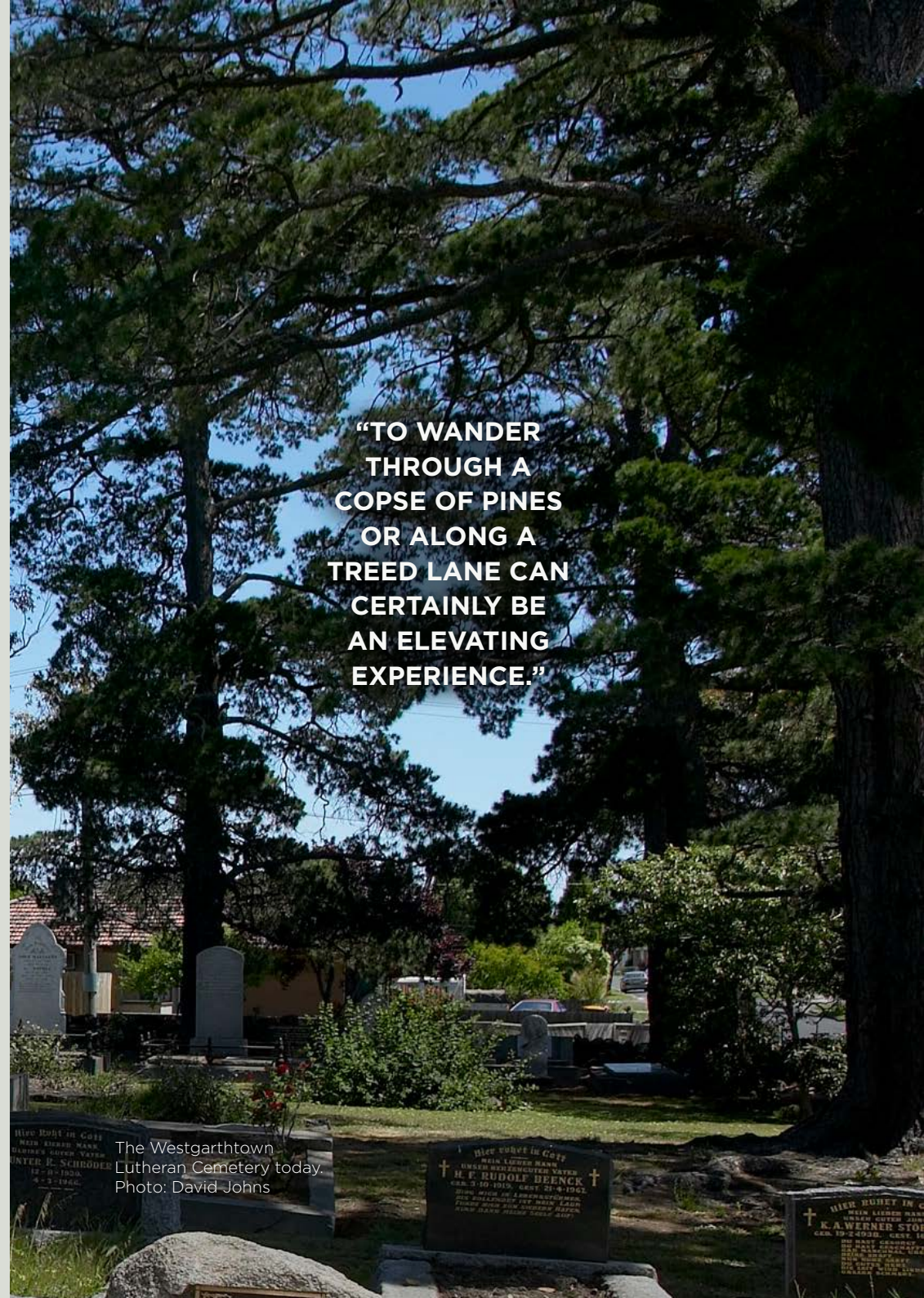
*And soothed, by every azure breath  
That under heaven is blown,  
To harmonies of hues beneath,  
As tender as its own.*

— *The Pine Forest*  
by Percy Bysshe Shelley



Ziebell's dam 1940. Photo: Augusta Borrack (née Ziebell).

**"TO WANDER  
THROUGH A  
COPSE OF PINES  
OR ALONG A  
TREED LANE CAN  
CERTAINLY BE  
AN ELEVATING  
EXPERIENCE."**



The Westgarthtown Lutheran Cemetery today.  
Photo: David Johns





Winter's Homestead  
and outbuildings c. 1956.  
Photo: Trinity Lutheran  
Church, East Melbourne.

# Memories of Thomastown around 1950

BY JOHN BOLD

As a child, John Bold's family moved from country Victoria to live in the Bold family farmhouse, otherwise known as Winter's Homestead.

**D**uring 1950, my father John James Bold, his wife Joan and two children, Anne and I, moved to Thomastown from Forrest (a saw-milling town in the Otway Ranges) where my father had been Head Teacher at the local school. We lived in the Bold family farmhouse, otherwise known as Winter's Homestead, for about 12-18 months.

Dad was the eldest son of Mary and James Robinson Bold.

Dad had received a promotion to teach at North Brunswick Primary School, hence our move to the city, although at that time Thomastown was still very much a farming community. My sister Anne and I attended the old red brick Thomastown Primary School, where my father and uncle were



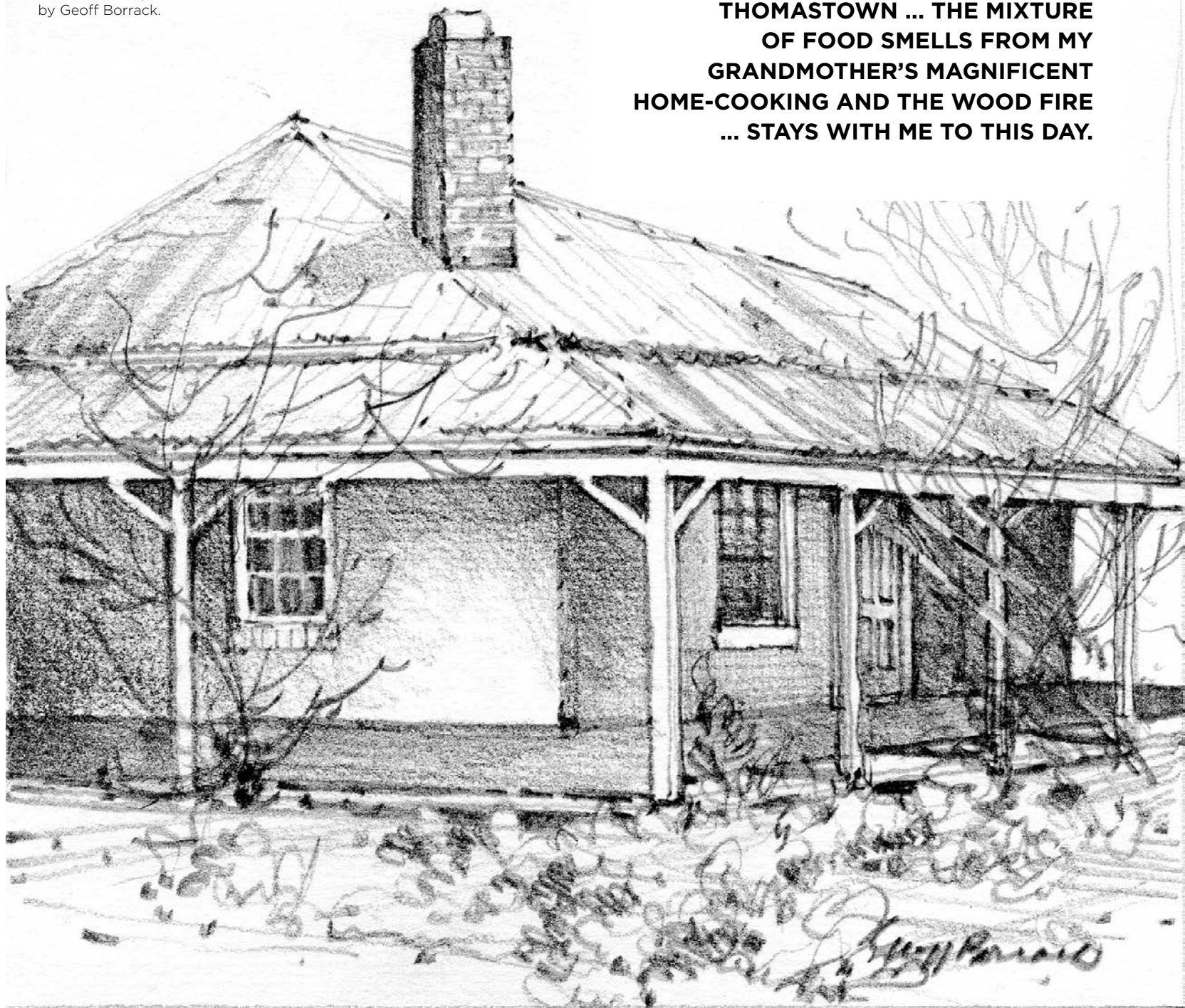
also educated. One of their Head Teachers had been Leo Borrack, father of John and Geoff Borrack.

My recollections of Winter's Homestead are many and fond. The house was located about 200-300 metres north-west of the Lutheran Church, which was separated from the Bold farm by the Edgars Creek. I can clearly remember attending the church for Sunday School, something I gather my father and his younger brother Charlie also did as boys.

The farm property retained some out-houses and a large barn to the west of the house which is visible in the photo of the property reproduced on page 6. The house was built mostly of bluestone, with bedrooms and dining room separated from a large kitchen/living area by a vestibule, a square room probably 5x5 metres with a ceramic-tiled floor. On hot summer days, this room was always about 10-15 degrees cooler than the rest of the house, the bluestone walls like those in the Ziebell family house providing good insulation.

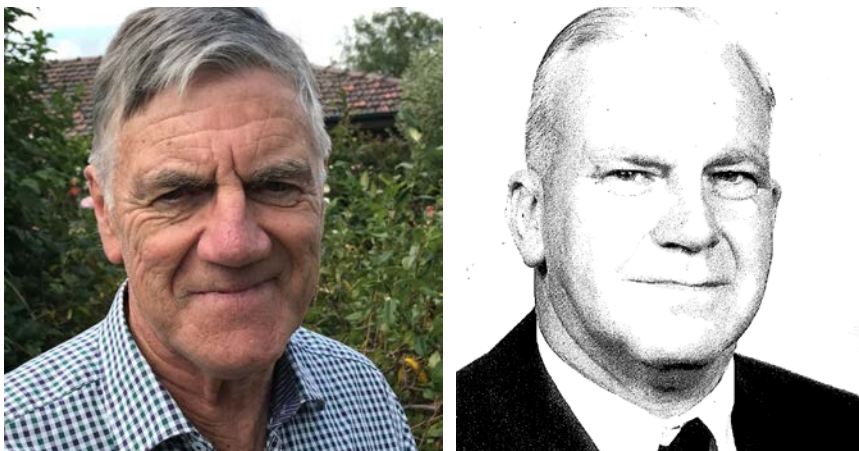
In each of the bedrooms (three from memory), I recall iron bedsteads, fine cedar chests of drawers and dressing tables with hand-painted porcelain washbasins and commodes. The latter of course were essential unless, in the middle of a cold winter's night one was game enough to brave the 50m or so

Sketch of the Winter's house at Westgarthtown by Geoff Borrack.



**THE 'AROMA' OF OUR HOME AT THOMASTOWN ... THE MIXTURE OF FOOD SMELLS FROM MY GRANDMOTHER'S MAGNIFICENT HOME-COOKING AND THE WOOD FIRE ... STAYS WITH ME TO THIS DAY.**





John Bold (left) and John Bold Snr. (John James Bold). Photos: John Bold

walk to the outside lavatory serviced by a 'night man', which of course preceded connection of a sewerage system still some 25 years away. The dining room was also furnished with a cedar dining setting (table and 6 chairs) later sold at a ridiculously low price to a second-hand furniture dealer in Preston.

I guess all of us associate our early years with the 'aroma' of our home and that was certainly the case for me at Thomastown, where the mixture of food smells from my grandmother Mary's magnificent home-cooking and that of the wood fire, constantly burning day and night in the kitchen stove, stays with me to this day. If only one could recreate such simple pleasures.

The farmhouse faced east and had an unbroken view, probably for the best part of a kilometre,

across treeless paddocks to Epping Road. Beyond that was the now electrified South Morang line, along which a single carriage diesel railmotor (electric trains terminated then at Thomastown station), shuttled between Thomastown and Whittlesea.

My other memory of that view was when my father and Charlie, his younger brother, used hessian bags soaked in water to put out a grass fire which had started near Epping Road. In about 1950 our family sold the farmland between Mt View and Epping Roads and the open paddocks were soon transformed into a sea of tents (large and small) and makeshift huts made out of galvanised iron sheets and three-ply. These were the temporary/semi-permanent dwellings occupied by the many

European migrants who lived under such conditions while building their houses on site, having bought quarter-acre blocks into which the farm land had been subdivided and sold by eager developers and estate agents keen to make their fortune converting farm land into 'suburbia'.

In particular, I recall a Christmas-New Year period, when a series of violent thunderstorms ripped apart these flimsy dwellings and Edgars Creek broke its banks and threatened our barn and homestead.

Other memories of the 'Bold Farm' and its homestead include:

- Butter made by churn from the milk provided by a couple of dairy cows still kept on the farm.
- Killing, plucking and cooking a chicken, duck or goose for Christmas dinner. (From memory, the copper in the outside wash-house was used to cook 'the bird').
- A small vegetable garden lovingly tilled by my dad so he could give me my first lesson in vegetable growing. Of course the first 'crop' had to be radishes, so I could see the almost over-night germination of the seeds. I retain my love of vegie gardening to this day.
- The family piano (a 'Clayton' brand 'manufactured especially for Allans' or so the inscription reads) which resided in the lounge room at Thomastown and

is still in our Vermont home to this day, having travelled much in the intervening years.

- The Well. Much like the one at Ziebell's Farmhouse, it had a hand-operated pump, but was covered by timber decking.
- The beautiful 'cottage garden' at the front of the house, where my grandmother, Mary, tended her flowers, especially the standard roses of which I recall there were many different colours.
- Some gigantic bonfires, well prepared for Empire Day and/or Guy Fawkes Night, around which every variety of fire cracker including little Tom Thumbs, Penny-Bungers, Katherine Wheels and of course sky-rockets, were fired.

***John Bold** is a descendant of original settlers Friedrich and Maria Winter, who arrived in Australia aboard the Pribislaw in February 1850 with four children. In Friends of Westgarthtown News, Vol.17, No. 2, October 2013 we included an article about the Winter family. When Friedrich and Maria's daughter Eliza Winter died in 1935, the 50 acre farm passed to her niece, Mary Bold (née Ward), who had lived there with her husband James and sons John and Charles for over 10 years. John Bold (1913-76) trained as a teacher and was principal of Lalor Primary School from 1963-1974. This article was written by John Bold's son, also a teacher named John, who visited Ziebell's Farmhouse on Descendants' Day in 2015 and 2017.*

# Ernst Gottlob Wanke

Ernst Gottlob Wanke (1821-97) of Berlin arrived in Melbourne in April 1849 aboard the *Dockenhuden* with his wife Anna (née Hahn).

BY ROB WUCHATSCH

**A** former medical student, Wanke was engaged as the ship's surgeon for the voyage from Hamburg to Australia. Anna died in May 1849, six days after giving birth to a son, Andreas Gottlob, who also died.

Wanke (known as Gottlob Wanke) remarried on 24 May 1850 to Pauline Wilhelmina Krumbiegel (née Schumann), a widow from Dresden who arrived in 1849 aboard the *Wappaus*. Pauline

appears to have been living at Westgarthtown at the time of their marriage whereas Wanke lived in Melbourne. On 16 December 1850, along with Westgarthtown residents Friedrich Winter, Johann Wuchatsch and Johann Zimmer, Wanke was naturalized as a New South Wales citizen. His address was then 54 Bourke Street West in Melbourne and he worked as a hairdresser.

Wanke was actively involved in the establishment of the Lutheran



Photo:  
David Aumann

Church in Melbourne, including serving as a lay preacher, although Captain Stanley Carr disparagingly referred to him as a 'well meaning but thorough ranter'. He was also a member of the committees of the German Union and the German Benevolent Society.

On 30 April 1851 he purchased 30 acres at Westgarthtown (Lot 31, Section 25, Parish of Keelbundora) for £30. This land had previously been allocated to Pauline as the name Krumbuegel appears as joint occupier of Lots 29-31 with Moritz and Eleanora Wehner on an 1850 subdivision map of Section 25. Moritz Wehner purchased Lots 29-30 (70 acres) on 30 April 1851 for £70. However, On 6 October 1851, Wanke exchanged his land at Westgarthtown, then valued at £150, for a block of land in Johnston Street, Collingwood owned by Friedrich Gründel.

Wanke is said to have dug for gold at Castlemaine, missing a fortune by a few

inches. On his return from the goldfields he purchased 640 acres of Crown land at Harkaway near Berwick in April 1853 for £896 (Section 9, Parish of Berwick). To pay for this land he subdivided and sold his Collingwood block for a handsome profit. In May 1854, by prior agreement, he also subdivided



Pauline Wanke. Photo: David Aumann

and sold two thirds of the Harkaway land to Carl and Wilhelm Aurisch, but purchased a further 316 acres of adjoining land, some of which was also sold to fellow Germans. The farm he established, first known as Zion's Hill but later Hillcroft, was about 400 acres.

A brother, Johann Gottlieb Wanke, arrived in Australia with his wife and six children in 1855 and also settled at Harkaway.

Wanke founded the Harkaway Lutheran Church. He served as secretary for many years and conducted services between the visits of Pastors Goethe and Herlitz from Melbourne. On 11 December 1869, he conveyed a small section of his land 'in trust for chapel, school and other purposes' for the nominal sum of £1. He was also a foundation and long-serving member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Victoria's synod.

Ernst Gottlob Wanke died at Hillcroft on 7 August 1897 aged 75. The *Cranbourne and County Herald* noted that his remains were:

Followed to Harkaway Cemetery by a large body of friends, when Pastor Schramm gave an eloquent address at the grave, pointing out how just and Christian-like the deceased had lived – beloved by all. Deceased was well known as



Located in Berwick, Ernst Wanke Road commemorates his active presence in the community for over 40 years from 1853. Photo: Julie Nysingh

Dr Wanke, and he owned the model farm of the district.

Today's Ernst Wanke Road at Berwick commemorates his presence there.

Pauline died on 9 September 1904 aged 82 and was buried with her husband. Ernst Gottlob and Pauline Wanke had one child, Immanuel, born 1856, who married neighbour Bertha Aurisch in 1879. They had 15 children and two sons enlisted during World War 1 - Arthur Robert Wanke and Frederick William Wanke – the latter of whom died of wounds in France in 1918.





# William Westgarth's 1857 visit to Westgarthtown

BY ROB WUCHATSCH

In February 1857, William Westgarth left Australia for England and only returned for a short visit in 1888, during Australia's Centenary celebrations. Shortly before his departure in 1857, he visited Westgarthtown and the following observations about Germans in Victoria and the settlement which bore his name appeared on pages 56-58 of his book *Victoria and The Australian Gold Mines in 1857; with notes on the Overland Route from Australia, via Suez*. This book was written during his 1857 voyage to England and published in London later that year. Westgarth's references to Westgarthtown have been italicized.



Since the fame of her gold fields has gone abroad, Victoria has been an object of attraction to well nigh the whole world; from whose various races and nations she has received into her society some few or more representatives. Little of this mixture occurred prior to the gold era. The only foreign immigration of any noticeable amount at that time, was from Germany; which our own government, to a certain extent, encouraged, with a view of introducing persons accustomed to vine training and wine making. Above a thousand Germans arrived in 1849 and 1850, and many have been since added to this first stock. They are now found in every part of the colony, mining, farming, gardening, and dairying, in common with other colonists. They have established a newspaper, which is published weekly in Melbourne; and some of the more highly educated, and of scientific tastes, have made themselves useful in exploring the interior, and collecting the curious and still imperfectly known natural objects of the country.

*One of the earlier settlements of the first party, made upon a section of a square mile of land ten miles to the northward of Melbourne, exhibits the pleasant spectacle of an orderly variety of social life in the colony, and of the success attending the industry and well*

*known frugality of this people. There are above a hundred Germans on this section, who revel alike in the plenty of British Victoria and the luxury of still clinging to everything German. From everything purely British, a few steps transfer you as it were to Germany. The women are busy in the fields, with their German caps, their broad comely faces, and their broader guttural tongues. They rejoice in nothing so much as those everlasting difficulties of the English language, that have hitherto prevented their learning it. The garments of male and female are German, and so are the houses, which are even more impregnated than in Fatherland with the cherished tobacco odour; and there is a little German church perched on an eminence, where a German sermon is heard as opportunities contribute a preacher.*

*The section consists of a good soil, and the situation is favourable in regards to a market; for at any time in the course of three hours the thrifty housewife can have all her accumulations of milk, butter, eggs, and chickens, converted into hard cash at the inexhaustible Melbourne market; and that too at prices unknown perhaps anywhere else in the world. All are said to be doing well, and several are already reputed wealthy. I visited this comfortable spectacle of colonial life shortly before leaving the colony.*

*Considering the strength of home sickness in the Germans, these settlers paid the best compliment to the country, when they assured their visitors that they had no wish but to live and die in Victoria.*

Respecting the number of the German people in Victoria, I observe that under the head Religion, in the census of April, 1854, there is a return of 3014 as of Lutheran persuasion, to which for the most part the German colonists belong. Making a small addition for Catholic Germans, and on the

other hand a minuter deduction for Lutherans other than Germans, we may compute the numbers of 1854 at 3500. During the three years' interval that has since elapsed, these have probably increased to 6000. Parties of them have occasionally come across from South Australia, to which colony they had emigrated in large numbers some years before their attention was directed to Port Phillip, and where they now form one-tenth of the whole population.

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In his 1888 book *Personal Recollections of Early Melbourne & Victoria*, Westgarth also referred to his 1857 visit to Westgarthtown. He wrote:

WHEN in company with Neuhauss, my wife and I visited them in 1857, just before finally quitting the colony, we found considerable progress in the form of a scattered village, with a little Lutheran church, and some show of gardening and cultivation. They seemed delighted to stick to their German speaking, and would not even try to speak English. One amusing feature in the scramble as to allotments was that each tried, in most cases, to get trees, stones and rocks in preference to clear ground, as if so

much additional wealth. The trees might have had value for firewood, but in the other items they had probably more than they bargained for. We secured the land for them at a pound an acre, and the fact of their being so largely settled upon it raised its value at once considerably. All the land thereabout has now risen many times this first cost.

*For further information about William Westgarth (1815-1889) see Friends of Westgarthtown News Vol. 6, No. 2, September 2002 at [www.westgarthtown.org.au/archives](http://www.westgarthtown.org.au/archives).*



# Farewell to Tour Coordinator Tatiana Joukoff

BY JOHN FRY

On Saturday 14 January 2017, the Friends of Westgarthtown held a luncheon to honour and farewell our Tour Coordinator, Tatiana Joukoff.

**K**ind words were spoken by those who have worked with Tatiana over the years and a presentation made of a John Borrack drawing of Westgarthtown. Tatiana was very grateful, saying that she had always wanted a Borrack, now she had one.

Tatiana was appointed Tour Coordinator in 2005. At the time it was noted she was a 'retired secondary teacher and an experienced tour guide who has worked in tourism both in Victoria and interstate'. She conducted her first tour in March that year and her stated interest in social history was evident in how she

threw herself into the role. Tatiana gathered stories together from various sources, including Robert Wuchatsch, whom she acknowledged as a great source of information.

Anyone who participated in Tatiana's tours would agree that not only was she knowledgeable about her topic, but was also passionate in how she told her stories. Tatiana has one of those voices that was a delight to listen to and her 'performance' always engaged the audience.

Over the years, a wide range of groups visited Ziebell's Farmhouse, many on word of mouth recommendations. These included

guided tours of the Heritage Trail as part of the Cultural Heritage Program, school groups, Probus Clubs, Garden Clubs, you name it and they came. The common response from visitors was about Tatiana's friendliness as a person and professionalism as a tour guide. We could ask for no more.

The importance of Westgarthtown in the story of German settlement was demonstrated in 2012 when Dr Anitta Maksymowicz from Poland and Aileen and Wolfgang Preiss from South Australia visited Ziebell's Farmhouse. Dr Maksymowicz is Curator of the Lubuska Land Museum in Zielona

Gora, Poland (formerly Grünberg, Silesia) and was visiting German settlements in Australia.

The following email received from Dr Maksymowicz, in which she thanked Tatiana for showing her around Westgarthtown, sums up the role Tatiana played. She wrote 'Your guiding through the museum [Ziebell's Farmhouse] and explanations of the exhibition as well as telling me about the history has been a very significant lesson for me. I appreciate the work you do there to maintain the memory of the first settlers.'

Tatiana, we will miss you. Thank you for all of your work over the years.




Tatiana holding her farewell gift, with (anticlockwise) Prue McColl, Gillian Borrack, Robert Wuchatsch, Doretta Schultz, Paul Schultz, John Fry, Sheryl Kennedy, Darren Kennedy & Léon Borrack. Photo: Sue Gravenall




# Curios from yesteryear

Exploring the past through historical items is the theme of our 2017 contribution to the City of Whittlesea's Cultural Heritage Program.

BY GILLIAN BORRACK



Our event will be held on Sunday 19 November 2017 from 12 noon to 4 pm at Ziebell's Farmhouse with parking provided on the Westgarthtown Reserve entering from German Lane. The event is free and all are welcome.



The museum at Ziebell's Farmhouse houses many heritage farm tools and domestic utensils you will be unaccustomed to seeing today. A selection of these will be presented by our guides who will

explain their use and operation to visitors.

What is a butter pat? How does a meat safe work? From moulis to bale hooks: explore an enchanting world of old-fashioned tools, demystified by our volunteers.

Wander through the historic farmhouse, outbuildings and gardens. Sample scones baked in the farmhouse's original wood-fired oven, or enjoy a Bratwurst from the sausage sizzle. Free tea and coffee will also be served.

# Thomastown trek

BY LIZ PIDGEON

LACE up your sneakers! In addition to *Curios from yesteryear* and also as part of the City of Whittlesea's 2017 Cultural Heritage Program, Yarra Plenty Regional Library, in partnership with Friends of Westgarthtown, are presenting *Thomastown trek*.

This event will take place on Tuesday 10 October 2017 and start at the Thomastown Library, 62 Main Street, Thomastown commencing at 10.00 am through to 12.30pm.

Meet us at the Thomastown Library and let's discover the neighbourhood by foot as we stroll along Edgar's Creek to the historic precinct of Westgarthtown and return. We will stop at Ziebell's Farmhouse and Garden for morning tea and a brief tour before returning to the Library.

Walking shoes essential. Not recommended for children under 12 years old.

## 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.org.au](http://www.calvarychurch.org.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](mailto:enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au)

Tours can be organised for groups of ten or more people. For information and bookings contact John Fry on 03 9464 5062 or [johnsdfry@gmail.com](mailto:johnsdfry@gmail.com)

## Curios from yesteryear

DATE: Sun 19 November 2017  
TIME: 12:00-4:00 pm  
WHERE: Ziebell's Farmhouse  
INFO: Call Gillian Borrack on 03 9717 3559 or email [enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au](mailto:enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au)

## Thomastown trek

DATE: Tuesday 10 October 2017  
TIME: 10:00 am (2.5 hours)  
WHERE: Thomastown Library  
INFO: Call Liz Pidgeon on 03 9088 3465 or email [lpidgeon@yprrl.vic.gov.au](mailto:lpidgeon@yprrl.vic.gov.au)

## STOP PRESS

## Westgarthtown film shortlisted for MAPDA

THE Friends of Westgarthtown have been shortlisted in the Multimedia category of the 2017 Museums Australasia Publication Design Awards for our documentary film *Westgarthtown and World War 1*. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on 15 May. Visit [www.mapda.org.au/2017-winners](http://www.mapda.org.au/2017-winners) for more information.

## This Thomo Life podcast

DEAN Maranda, of the Thomastown Neighbourhood House, recently interviewed Rob Wuchatsch about Westgarthtown as part of its *Growing up at Thomastown* Podcast Series. To hear the Podcast see [www.tnh.org.au](http://www.tnh.org.au)

## Update on the threat to Schultz's farm

IN the last edition of *Elements of Westgarthtown* we reported on a planning application from Hanson Construction Materials Pty Ltd for a permit to demolish the remaining heritage buildings, structures and vegetation on the former Schultz's Farm at 45-135 Bridge Inn Road, Wollert.

We have recently been advised that Hanson and Council remain in discussion at this point, and no decision has yet been made.

## Cemetery burials list

THE Friends of Westgarthtown's online cemetery burials list has been updated — to view, go to [www.westgarthtown.org.au/cemetery](http://www.westgarthtown.org.au/cemetery)



# Descendants' Day 2017

STORY DAVID ADAMS  
PHOTOS JESSICA ADAMS

Our annual Descendants' Day was held on Sunday 5 March 2017 at Ziebell's Farmhouse.

**T**he weather was kind and pleasant allowing 60 descendants to gather on the lawn or under the trees to enjoy a picnic lunch and everyone's company. It was pleasing to see some new faces amongst the regulars who are relishing the opportunity to get together each year.

The day opened with a brief welcome from the Descendants' Day committee, followed by an update from John Fry, President of the Friends of Westgarthtown, who outlined the projects and objectives being worked on in the coming year.

This year the Descendants' Day committee introduced a Guest Book for all to sign and comment on the

day. Hopefully this will continue each year and will provide something to reflect back on in the years to come. We have also established a tradition of acknowledging the youngest and oldest descendant attending on the day. This year's youngest descendant went to Sebastian Ross (3 weeks old/ née Adams) and the oldest descendant was Stanley Ziebell. I think Stanley has taken out the honours four years running now. Keep up the good work Stanley.

The day concluded a success with everyone having enjoyed a relaxing time catching up with family and friends. Don't forget next year's Descendants' Day, the date being Sunday 4 March 2018. Put it in your diary now. Hope to see you then.



## SWITCH TO DIGITAL

If you are receiving this newsletter in the post  
but want to switch to email, simply email us at  
[newsletter@westgarthtown.org.au](mailto:newsletter@westgarthtown.org.au)

# Elements

OF WESTGARTHTOWN

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TREASURER Léon Borrack

COMMITTEE Paul Schultz & Doretta Belot

HISTORIAN Rob Wuchatsch

TOURS COORDINATOR John Fry

CARETAKERS Darren & Sheryl Kennedy