



German Heritage Festival & Christkindl Market

BY ELLEN MITCHELL

Our second German Heritage Festival was opened by Cr Frank Merlino, Mayor of the City of Whittlesea, on a dismal, rainy November Saturday on the Westgarthtown Reserve. Despite the weather, the event still attracted an audience of close to 1000, hailing not only from the Melbourne metropolitan area but also from rural regions and townships such as Lakes Entrance, Bendigo, Dimboola and Benalla. Many German speakers were found among our visitors. Although the envisaged target of 3000 visitors was not reached due to the unfavourable

weather conditions, the visitors were enthusiastic and complimentary on the manifold aspects of the Festival: the heritage profile of the Ziebell Farmhouse precinct, the Thomastown Lutheran Church, the imposing arc of marquees with stall holders offering their variety of quality wares next to heritage information stalls, the ambience generated in the beer hall etc.

Many enjoyed the culinary fares of savoury 'Wagner' Bratwursts in the paddock or those skillfully dispensed from a Rotary van by our own Marianne. Others were drawn to the Ziebell Garden Café, where delicious Fleischer cakes were offered with the stoic and enduring assistance rendered by volunteers including Marita, Phyllis, Ingrid and Harvey. Even the relentless light rain and wet chairs could not deter 'Apfelstrudel' lovers, however the wet chairs in front of the main stage remained predominantly empty while the musicians such as the Luther College Quartet, played valiantly on.

continued on page 2

INSIDE

Ziebell's Garden	P4
Research	P5
Out & About	P6
Obituary	P6
Fundraising	P8

More dates for your diary....

German FETE

In the atmosphere of a German village fair you can sample fine food & cake. Listen to live Bands like that of 'Silverbeet' and make purchases from the extensive craft & plant market.

Date: Saturday, 20 March 2004
Time: 10.00am – 3.00pm
Location: Martin Luther Homes Boronia
67 Mount View Road
The Basin, Boronia
(Melway 65, D7)

10th Wimmera German Fest

Offers various stalls, food & refreshments, all under cover with the KLEMZIG Oompah Band.

Date: 17 - 18th April 2004
Location: Dimboola Recreational Reserve
Enquiries: Pam 03 5389 4222

German Heritage Festival

continued from page 1

On the other hand the musical recitals in the Ziebell Farmhouse, capably presided over by Hege, and the Thomastown Lutheran Church, kindly made available by Irma and her team of Volunteers, were very well attended. Carol Appelt (flautist) and Igor Pelka (Guitar) played light classical pieces in the house, whereas John Noack from the Wendish Heritage Society performed in the Church. He combined his virtuosity on the organ with his pedagogic skills when introducing the compositions to the audience before playing the music. Of course, we would love to have him back as well as Carol, Igor and Hans Hahnemann, our Hurdy Gurdy man whose nostalgic melodies contributed so much to the atmosphere in the big beer tent.

The children's activities were unfortunately curtailed due to the rain. Yet over 400 primary students from 122 schools teaching German, participated in the very successful colouring competition organized by Felicity. All prizes were generously donated by the Goethe Institut, which was represented at the Festival by Eva Schulz.

Can you guess how many hours the German Heritage Festival committee and its network of volunteers collectively committed to the organization of the Festival? Well, here is



the impressive total: 1571 hours! Among those making major contributions were festival committee members Margaret Borrack (Christkindl Market), Gillian Borrack (Treasurer), Hege Eier (Ziebell Farmhouse), Marianne Reimann (Food & Beer), Felicity Renowden (Colouring Competition), Tatiana Joukoff (Promotion Stalls) and Marita Anders (Ziebell Garden Café). Their industry, research and faith in a venture that carried many aspects of the unknown, was admirable.

To them, their network of friends, all FoW volunteers and those who offered assistance from far away places our heartfelt thanks! Special thanks also to Simon Borrack and Hege Eier for transforming the garden into a state of splendour. Our gratitude also goes to David Trenerry for unhesitatingly accepting the role of MC and of course to the City of Whittlesea for making a grant available for the event and to Brooke Wilson and Renee Steain for their unstinting help and co-operation.

We all learnt a great deal and are keen to commit to an annual German Heritage Festival with an expanded Christkindl Market, itinerant musicians, more Clydesdales and farm animals, self guided garden tours, a raffle and Bratwursts galore on the barbecue! And last but not least - with sunshine! Add increased funding and we have conditions entirely conducive to the holding of our next festival on Saturday, 20 November 2004. Why not put this date into your diary now.

Chris Fargher sells home-made pickles & chutney



The Old Organ at Westgarthtown

BY ED PORRITT

Some friends and I attended the festival day [22 November 2003] at Westgarthtown, which in principle was a great day out, except that it rained all day, spoiling much of the outdoor entertainment. However there was one saving factor, and that was a visit to the old church which was not only open but very interesting to see (not to mention that it was dry inside).

Once inside we found something that was an even greater pleasure, that being the organ being played by John Noack, an extremely competent organist. The organ by general standards is quite small and by all appearances could be expected to be somewhat wheezy. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the hands of this most competent musician, the sounds being produced were nothing short of amazing, both in quality of tone and range. With the skilful use of knee pedals and stops, the organist produced excellent renditions of J.S.Bach's 'Sheep may safely graze' and several other popular classical compositions, which were thoroughly enjoyed by all that were fortunate enough to be there.

I regarded this alone well worth the trip over to the festival, and weathering the soaking rain and would strongly urge anybody who gets the chance to do so without fail.

Reproduced with permission from the Doncaster-Templestowe Historical Society March 2004 Newsletter

Editor's note: It has recently been discovered that the organ mentioned above, a US made Estey dating from the 1890s, cost the Thomastown congregation £40 when it was purchased in 1924. The funds to buy the organ were collected from members and benefactors by Pastor Frank and Mrs Zimmer. (Information from Trinity Lutheran Church, East Melbourne).

Working Bee brings honey to Ziebell's garden

BY SIMON BORRACK & HEGE EIER
Caretakers Ziebell Farmhouse

Every first Saturday of the month a group of volunteers show up in the Ziebell garden. Rakes, spades and secateurs find their way out of the gardening shed and into the garden. It's the gardening group -The Working Bee- setting to work in the Ziebell garden.

In the last three months the working bee has continued its previous work, weeding, pruning, scrubbing and restoring brick work around the beds. However, new initiatives have also been made. A selection of seeds and

seedlings have been collected and stored and will soon be available for sale to visitors at the house. Among these; Aquilegias, Hollyhock, Poppy, Nigella (Love in the mist), Everlasting Forget Me Nots and plenty of Calendular.

The gardening group is also currently discussing an Autumn plan for the thinning out and relocation of the vast numbers of Narcissus bulbs (Daffodils and Jonquils). This will improve plant growth and enhance the overall layout of the garden during the Spring Season. The cooler beginning to Spring time in 2003 saw a slowing down of roses in bloom, but the growth rates and blooming are now at their height, making a visit to Ziebell's Farmhouse smelling of roses.

However as much as the first Saturday of the month is a working day, it is also a social day. Over lunch in the kitchen or in the Ziebell garden-as weather allows- stories of life at the farm are exchanged. Some first hand, while others passed down through generations. Sylvia Schultz, taking a rest from scrubbing the Southern wall of the house, explains that in the working time of the farm, whoever went to bed last had to chase the Sparrows from the veranda with the broom.

As caretakers we would like to thank everyone who keeps turning up every first Saturday of the month "you are truly the honey of the garden". A very special thanks also goes to working bee members Robert and Gaye Wuchatsch for keeping an eye on the house and looking after the garden while we were away on holiday this summer. A special thanks also goes to Gill Borrack and Nanette for the collection of seeds whilst we were away. We look forward to many more working bee Saturdays in the Ziebell garden and also wish new working bees welcome.

Ian Ziebell weeds along the garden fence (Working Bee February 2004)



Carl Ewert's Will

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

Jennie Thomson of Aspendale, a Ewert descendant, recently completed her family tree and kindly sent me a copy on CD. In it she covers the very interesting story of the two Ewert brothers - Carl and Friedrich - who emigrated to Australia from Torpin, Germany in 1856. Their parents, Joachim and Sophie, also emigrated to Australia, in 1858.

Carl Ewert spent several years at Westgarthtown during the mid 1860s, living in the old Maltzahn house. Previously he had lived for some time at nearby Janefield, his place of residence in 1859 when he married Maria Rosel, daughter of the Wends Johann and Johanna Rosel. The Rosel family lived in a small stone cottage near the corner of today's Tramoo Street and Mount View Road.

By 1869, Carl and Maria owned an 80 acre farm in Bindt's Road, Wollert (their neighbour Christian Bindt was married to Maria's sister Magdalena Rosel). In that year he decided to make a will, leaving his estate to his wife and children. By the time of his death in 1896, Maria had been dead for two years and the older children referred to by name in the will had already had a start in life, whereas the youngest children, born after 1869, were more in need of financial assistance. At a family gathering with Carl's executor Ernst Gottlob Schultz, it was agreed by all Carl's children that the old will should be destroyed, so the younger children could best benefit from Carl's estate. The will was duly burned in the fireplace, however the illegality of this action was soon realised and it took Ernst Schultz some time to provide an acceptable explanation to the Probate authorities.

Carl, his wife Maria and at least four children are buried at Westgarthtown, along with Sophie Ewert, who died in 1869. Her grave is marked by a small bluestone memorial, said to have been carved by the Ewert family themselves, to save money.

Note: The City of Whittlesea has advised that Phase 2 of the Westgarthtown Cemetery restorations will commence on 9 March and conclude on 16 April 2004.

Seeking Information

On 20 January 1859, the 700 ton ship, Macassar, arrived at Port Melbourne. It had departed the Port of Hamburg on 17 October 1858 with 52 adult passengers on board. Amongst these were Johann Christian Waese and his wife, Elisabeth (nee Baumgarten) who had come from Kopernitz, a small village south west of Brandenburg. Their first child, two-year-old Friederike, was with them. The spelling of Waese later became Waser. Johann and Elisabeth settled initially in the Westgarthtown/ Epping area. Elisabeth is buried in the Westgarthtown Cemetery along with one of her children who died as a toddler.

I welcome information that readers may have about Johann and Elisabeth and their children, the youngest of whom was my grandmother. Teina Annamina (Minnie) McCorriston (nee Waser).

I also welcome information that readers may have about the ship, Macassar, and the voyage. I have not yet found information about this ship, nor a photograph or picture of it. Perhaps there are other descendants of folk who immigrated on this ship who have information that they are willing to share?

Please telephone Mr. G. McCorriston on 9381 0618 if you have any information.

Trinity Lutheran Church Book

The launch of the book *A German Church in the Garden of God: Melbourne's Trinity Lutheran Church 1853-2003* has been delayed but should now take place over the next few months. Profusely illustrated with over 350 photographs, lithographs, maps and other documents, including 16 colour pages, this 700 page book will appeal to the reader with a general interest in Australian history as well as historians and genealogists who will find the detailed references a useful research tool. The book contains a comprehensive article on the Thomastown Lutheran Church written by Rob Wuchatsch.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE: The book will cost \$55, including GST, if ordered and paid for prior to publication and collected from Trinity Church, East Melbourne, or \$65 if mailed out.

POST PUBLICATION PRICE: Prices after publication will be \$65, including GST, if collected from Trinity Church or \$75 if mailed out.

Mail your order and payment to:
German Lutheran Trinity Church
22 Parliament Place
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Westgarthtown Tours

BY ELLEN MITCHELL

Over 2000 visitors made the journey to Westgarthtown during 2003 including those that attended the German Heritage Festival & Christkindl Market last November.

In October 2003 we had much pleasure in welcoming members of the Doncaster & Templestowe Historical Society and the Descendants of Convicts' group to Westgarthtown. Quince's Bus & Coach tours sent two large groups from the Rushall Retirement Village and Moorleigh U3A (University of the Third Age) for a guided tour and lunch in October and early November respectively. These organizations enjoyed their heritage discovery tour of the Ziebell precinct enormously and could not stop commenting on the delicious and ample gourmet sandwiches and variety of cakes that FoW volunteers had so generously provided. Quince's has made four further bookings for this year so far and we are gratified to have entered into a mutually beneficial association with this enterprising bus company.

On 18 January 2004 we were particularly privileged to greet Eva Schulz from the Goethe Institut with 30 advanced German students. These came from all over Australia to attend the three-week intensive summer school, a learning facility established by the Goethe Institut, Melbourne for all those eager to brush up on their German language skills and sample German culture and heritage in the metropolis and beyond. At Ziebell's Farmhouse the inquisitive group was very impressed by our documentary display which now plays a vital role in visual education. The 'Kaffee und Kuchen' offerings of sumptuous cakes mainly supplied by Marita and Klara more than fulfilled all yearnings for quality and quantity.

For those interested to glean some rudimentary information about the scope of activities of the Goethe Institut the following might be of interest: The Institut is dedicated to the dissemination of German culture and language throughout the world. It offers cultural programs (lectures, documentary & feature films, theatre productions, fine arts and documentary exhibitions), a library and media centre open to the

OBITUARY



Decima Prott

(6 September 1913 – 27 October 2003)

BY JOHN BORRACK

Some weeks after celebrating her 90th birthday at the Ziebell Farmhouse where she was born, Decima Prott died suddenly at her home in Thomastown.

The youngest of ten Ziebell siblings, all born at the Ziebell Farm, she is survived by her only son Henry and two older sisters, Esther Usher and Bertha Pettit.

Her happy presence will be missed at the Ziebell Farmhouse functions and in the local Lutheran community to which she contributed selflessly across the years.

general public, educational services & resources for teachers and language courses for all levels. Look up <http://www.goethe.de> as this will lead you to the homepages of the Goethe-Institutes worldwide.

Opening of Ziebell's Farmhouse Exhibition

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

On 5 March 2004 the Friends of Westgarthtown and City of Whittlesea combined to launch the recently installed permanent exhibition at Ziebell's Farmhouse. About fifty Friends of Westgarthtown members, City of Whittlesea councillors and staff and invited guests attended the evening event.

Graeme Brennan Chief Executive Officer of the City of Whittlesea officially welcomed guests and introduced Cr Frank Merlino, Mayor of the City of Whittlesea. Cr Merlino, a long time supporter of Westgarthtown, then introduced Ellen Mitchell, President of the Friends of Westgarthtown, who also welcomed all and acknowledged the presence of very special guests. Ellen introduced Geoff Borrack, Vice-President of the Friends of Westgarthtown. Finally, Ray Tonkin, Executive Director of Heritage Victoria and guest speaker spoke of the long history of Australian immigration before officially declaring the Exhibition open. All spoke of Westgarthtown's historical importance as Victoria's oldest and best preserved German settlement.

The exhibition, designed by Geoff Borrack, tells of the establishment of the Westgarthtown German settlement at Thomastown and also highlights the Ziebell family's place in that story. It traces the German and Wendish settlers' emigration from Germany via the Port of Hamburg in 1848-49; their arrival in Melbourne; and settlement in 1850 at Keelbundora, as the area was then known. The display panels include both text and copies of old church, military and emigration documents, maps and photographs, all attractively presented in themes to allow visitors to follow the story down the years. Included in the display is the Ziebell family's old wooden sea chest, now over 150 years old. Congratulations Geoff on a wonderful job.



Visiting Ziebell's Farmhouse

Ziebell's Farmhouse is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month between 1-4 pm. For enquiries contact Simon Borrack and Hege Eier on 9464 1805.

Tours can be organised for groups of 10 or more people. For information and bookings contact Ellen Mitchell on 9836 2917.

Thomastown Lutheran Church Services

Services are held on alternate Sundays (second and fourth Sunday of the month) at 11.15 am at the Thomastown Lutheran Church, German Lane, Lalor.

For further details, contact Pastor Stephen Pietsch at Calvary Lutheran Church, Greensborough on 03 9435 6846.

Farmers' Market at Westgarthtown Reserve

BY GILLIAN BORRACK

In order to help raise funds to maintain and improve the Ziebell Farmhouse Precinct the Friends are currently investigating the possibility of joining the Australian Farmers' Markets Association with a view to establishing a regular monthly Farmer's Market on the Westgarthtown Reserve at Thomastown. The money raised will also help us embark on our new big goal of rebuilding the historic Lutheran schoolhouse. The Farmers' Market will be a predominantly fresh food market. It will provide a suitable environment for farmers and food producers to sell farm-origin products directly to customers at affordable prices. Producers will sell their own organic fruit, vegetables, breads, cheeses, oils, spices, and cordials with seasonal variety. The Friends believe this to be in keeping with the Heritage Precinct and the lifestyles of the early settlers at Westgarthtown.

At the moment the Farmers' Market is in the planning phase only. Our plan is to have the market open in the morning of the second Sunday in the month with suggested hours of 8am – 12 noon, followed by the Ziebell Farmhouse open afternoon from 1pm – 4pm. In reality this would mean that the Friends would run the two activities in tandem, with the farmhouse being open from say 10am to 4pm giving visitors access to both the Farmers' Market and the Ziebell Farmhouse with the standard \$2.00 entry fee covering access to both. The Friends envisage selling their own preserves, seeds, seedlings etc and would probably run a 'Ziebell Café' or similar tea /coffee venue. The Friends also believe the market will foster a community spirit by increasing the City of Whittlesea's rural/ urban linkages. The Heritage precinct will also benefit significantly from the increase of visitors and make a contribution to tourism in the area.

If the plan comes to fruition it would mean that the Friends would need many volunteers on the second Sunday of the month to help out in various capacities such as Entrance Gate collectors, helpers for the Ziebell Café, and people to sit in the Ziebell Farmhouse. If you are interested in helping in any capacity please contact the Co-ordinator Margaret Borrack on 9417 5331 or 5236 3252.

FRIENDS OF WESTGARTHTOWN INC.

ABN 74 674 258 165 Inc. Reg No. A0032721Y

Enquiries (03) 9464 5062

PO Box 95 Thomastown VIC 3074

enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au

www.westgarthtown.org.au

President **Ellen Mitchell**
 Vice-President **Geoff Borrack**
 Secretary **Marianne Reimann**
 Treasurer **Gillian Borrack**
 Committee Members **Rob Wuchatsch**
Paul Schultz

Historian **Rob Wuchatsch**
 Heritage Architect **Geoff Borrack**
 Tours Coordinator **Ellen Mitchell**
 Caretakers **Simon Borrack**
Hege Eier

Editor **Rob Wuchatsch**
 Design **Léon Borrack**

Westgarthtown is the oldest and most intact German/ Wendish settlement in Victoria. Established in March 1850, it celebrated its 150th Anniversary in the year 2000.

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.