

## Farm Building Display Panels



In the April 2011 edition of *Friends of Westgarthtown News* we reported on the celebrations for the 160th Anniversary of German and Wendish settlement at Westgarthtown. During those celebrations, new interpretive panels were launched at Ziebell's Farmhouse providing a focus on the Westgarthtown Precinct farm buildings. Heritage Architect **Geoffrey Borrack** explains the background to their creation.

In mid 1958, I was engaged in architectural studies at the University of Melbourne. Our history tutor set us the task of researching a project of our choosing on early Australian architecture and submitting a

detailed report.

Our team of three, consisting of myself, Henry Retallick and B. J. Ong, an Asian student, chose to research the history and buildings of New Mecklenburg, which was an early name for Westgarthtown. Many of the original buildings were relatively intact and I had a lifelong familiarity with the settlement as an offspring of the Ziebell family. The Ziebell farm still operated along with several others and my grandmother, then in her mid eighties, retained a detailed memory of the past. We felt there was an excellent opportunity for our research study and set to work armed with measuring tapes, note pads

*continued PAGE 6*

### INSIDE

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Sylvia Schultz retires | p2 |
| Johann Gründel         | p4 |
| Jakob Grützner         | p5 |
| Out & About            | p6 |
| Mernda street signs    | p7 |
| Love & Lace exhibition | p8 |

## Sylvia Schultz retires from Management Committee

BY GILLIAN BORRACK



In August, at the Friends of Westgarthtown's 2011 Annual General Meeting, Sylvia Schultz announced her retirement from the Management Committee and the position of President which she has held for three years. She gracefully thanked the committee and members who over the years have worked together with the City of Whittlesea towards our shared goals of restoring Ziebell's Farmhouse and Garden; the interpretation of the history of the original German settlers, including those who arrived aboard the *Pribislaw* in 1850; detailed displays on the Ziebell families who lived in the farmhouse; and more recently the Westgarthtown Buildings project. This work has enabled not only local people and school children, but the wider community who now visit and tour the Thomastown Pioneer Precinct in increasing numbers, to marvel at what they see and discover.

Sylvia is now the oldest direct descendant of Christian and Sophia Ziebell, the original owners of the Ziebell farm, to have lived and grown up at the Ziebell Farmhouse. Sylvia came to live at the Ziebell farm with her grandparents as a six-year-old in 1932 to allow her to attend school in Melbourne.

## Peters descendant visits Westgarthtown

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

Murray Peters, a great great grandson of *Pribislaw* passengers Daniel Peters and Louise Ziebell, visited Westgarthtown with his wife Diana on 30 September 2011.

New Zealand born but resident for many years in Perth, Western Australia, Murray is a grandson of John Julius Peters, the Boer War veteran profiled in our April 2009 *Friends of Westgarthtown News* (Vol. 13, No. 1). Murray and his wife enjoyed their visit to Westgarthtown, where Robert Wuchatsch gave them a tour of Ziebell's Farmhouse and the Lutheran Cemetery and Irma Hatty showed them through the Lutheran Church.

Murray, who has since become a member of the Friends of Westgarthtown, was particularly pleased to learn of

the location of his Peters ancestors' graves and intends to arrange plaques for them as they are currently unmarked.



Murray Peters at the site of his ancestors' graves.

Her mother, Sylvia Adams, second daughter of Carl Alfred and Dorothea Ziebell, returned to the farm in 1936 when her husband died suddenly at Griffith, near their farm at Goolgowi, 49 kilometres west of Griffith in New South Wales, leaving her a widow with four small children.

Living with her grandparents and three younger brothers Sylvia spent a great deal of time helping her grandmother with chores in the farmhouse and the garden. Her grandfather Carl Alfred Ziebell died in 1940 when Sylvia was 14 and his widow Dorothea lived on in the farmhouse for the rest of her life, sharing it with her four Adams grand children, her daughter Verona, and Sylvia's mother at weekends. As Dorothea's only granddaughter living at Ziebell's Farmhouse, Sylvia accumulated an enormous knowledge from this experience, as well as hearing constant oral history relating to farming, food preparation and the beloved garden.

Dorothea Ziebell encouraged her young granddaughter Sylvia to help with the garden, and Sylvia's knowledge and love of gardening has endured to this day, 79 years later. Over all this time she has helped with the care of the Ziebell garden. Firstly she helped her grandparents, then her aunts and later her mother. Sylvia's interest in the garden continued after her marriage and she regularly returned to help her mother and grandmother maintain it until the farmhouse was purchased by the City of Whittlesea in 1993. Her knowledge and dedication is extraordinary and has provided a clear and articulate link for over a century from Dorothea Ziebell to the present day. The oral stories Dorothea passed on to her granddaughter Sylvia contained memories of her own childhood as the daughter of Christian and Sophia's youngest child Caroline who arrived at Westgarthtown in 1850 aged 10. Caroline continued to visit the Ziebell farm up until her death in 1919 at the age of 79.

By the 1950's only two daughters, Verona Ziebell and Sylvia Adams, remained with Dorothea at the farmhouse. They continued to tend their beautiful gardens and maintain the farmhouse albeit with the help of other family members from time to time. In all Dorothea lived at Ziebell's Farmhouse for fifty-eight years and her contribution to the garden as we know it today was immense. She and Carl passed their love of gardening on to their ten children who, as they left the farm, all established their own productive gardens with orchards,



Three generations: Sylvia Schultz, Sylvia Adams and Dorothea Ziebell c.1945

vegetable and flower gardens. They took slips, seedlings, cuttings and seeds from their family home and this has enabled the Friends of Westgarthtown to re-establish many plants that had been lost. After Dorothea's death in 1969, aged 96, Sylvia Adams looked after the gardens with the help of her daughter, Sylvia Schultz, until Sylvia Adams' death in 1990, aged 90.

After Sylvia's mother, Sylvia Adams died in 1990, the house and garden were somewhat neglected until purchased by the City of Whittlesea in 1993. In 1994, Sylvia assisted Skill Share as they began restoration on the garden. Since 1995, when the Friends of Westgarthtown group was formed, Sylvia has guided and helped the Friends to restore the garden back to its former glory, nurturing it so that it will endure and enable its many visitors to enjoy the vision begun 161 years ago.

At the AGM in August 2008 Sylvia was elected as President of the Friends of Westgarthtown and for the past three years has also represented the Friends on the City of Whittlesea's Cultural Heritage committee, the Whittlesea Plenty Valley Tourism Association committee and the Thomastown Pioneer Precinct committee. We congratulate Sylvia on her enormous contribution at an age when most people would be content to sit back and smell the roses! We all give her our heartfelt thanks, acknowledging that without her enthusiasm, dedication, knowledge, continuous guidance and help, most of our achievements in the past 16 years would not have been possible. We are already missing her constant presence, but know that we retain her continuing interest and support.



# Johann Friedrich Gotthelf Gründel

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

**J**ohann Friedrich Gotthelf Gründel (1811–88) was born at Zimmermere near Görlitz, Silesia on 19 January 1811. He arrived in Melbourne with his wife Juliana Carlotta Gründel (née Furle) and three children — Marie, Friedrich Jun. and Gustav — aboard the *Godeffroy* in February 1849.

Friedrich, as he was known, was naturalized as a New South Wales citizen on 30 December 1850. His occupation was given as joiner, although in later years, he was described as a carpenter.

In 1851 Friedrich purchased a block of land between Johnston and Argyle Streets, Fitzroy. Then on 6 October 1851, he bought fellow German Gottlob Wanke's 30 acres at Westgarthtown (Lot 31, Parish of Keelbundora — site of today's Thomastown swimming pool) for £150. Friedrich in turn sold his block at Fitzroy to Wanke for £150, so they effectively swapped their landholdings.

On 28 February 1853, Friedrich sold Lot 31 at Westgarthtown to his son-in-law Jakob Grützner for £150. The Gründel family then moved to Grützner's 158 acre farm (Lot B, Section 12, Parish of Nillumbik) at St Helena near Greensborough, where another child, Elizabeth Sarah Gründel, was born in 1857.

On 1 May 1852 Marie Gründel (c.1836–90) married Jakob Grützner of Westgarthtown; on 13 May 1873 Friedrich Jun. (known as Frederick) Gründel (c.1848–97) married Mary Jane Merrall of Preston; and on 24 October 1876 Sarah Gründel (1857–1939) married

August Wuchatsch. The remaining child, Gustav Gründel (c.1844–99), did not marry.

Juliana Carlotta Gründel, born on 13 March 1811, died of apoplexy at Greensborough on 31 May 1872 aged 61. She was buried in the St Helena Cemetery. Later that year Friedrich was appointed caretaker of Trinity German Lutheran Church at East Melbourne. He made and donated a crucifix for the new Trinity church which was erected in 1874. He also donated and collected money towards the church building fund.

On 23 January 1877, he married Louise Zorn (née Hertel) at the Trinity German Lutheran Church. Louise, a widow from Stargard, Germany was 45 and, like Friedrich, lived at Richmond. However, Louise died on 17 December 1882 and on 6 August 1883, Friedrich married for the third time, to widow Maria Kortegast (née von Brook) aged 38, also of Richmond.

In August 1887, Friedrich resigned as caretaker at Trinity, receiving an armchair worth £3 in recognition of his 15 years of service. He moved to Germantown (now Grovedale) near Geelong, where he died of peritonitis on 14 February 1888, aged 77. He was buried in the Germantown Cemetery and his estate, valued for probate at £650, passed to his wife and children. His main assets were two weatherboard houses in Brighton Street, Richmond valued at £550 and £100 personal estate, mainly cash. His widow Maria remarried on 11 August 1888 to an Englishman named William Casey.

## John Graff v Paul Metzenthin: 1879 Assault At Thomastown

On 13 December 1879, the *Mercury and Weekly Courier* reported on a court case held at Preston, as follows:

*Defendant [Metzenthin] and a man named Ziebell went to complainants and in consequence of some dispute about a letter written to defendant forbidding him from Graff's house. When there, defendant threw complainant to the ground and beat him. Assistance came and took Metzenthin off when complainant went into his house and*

*locked the door, defendant then burst open the door with logs of wood. Ziebell was encouraging Metzenthin and saying "Give it to him". The bench remarked "Of course there was a woman at the bottom of it." A gentle Annie was in this case the Fair Helen, that caused the Siege of Troy, (Graff's Castle) and Metzenthin was the Achilles that laid low Graff's Hector. Fined 20s. and 25s. costs.*

Nothing more is known about this incident.

# Jakob Grützner

BY ROBERT WUCHATSCH

**G**ottlieb Jakob Grützner (1823-1912), a probable Wend from Wartha, 20 kilometres north of Bautzen in Saxony, arrived in Melbourne from Hamburg aboard the *Wappaus* in March 1849. On the shipping list, his occupation was given as mason, but there is no evidence he ever practiced that trade in Australia. He is said, however, to have engaged in brickmaking at Brunswick not long after arrival in Australia, before then going to the goldfields.

Jakob was naturalized as a Victorian citizen on 25 March 1852. Earlier that month he had purchased 158 acres at Greensborough for £158 (Lot B, Section 12, Parish of Nillumbik). On 28 February 1853 he bought more land — 30 acres at Westgarthtown for £150 (Lot 31, Parish of Keelbundora — site of Thomastown swimming pool) — from his father-in-law Johann Gründel. The Gründel family, from Görlitz, Silesia had arrived in Australia aboard the *Godeffroy* in February 1849 and Jakob married daughter Marie Louise Gründel on 1 May 1852 at the Independent Church in Melbourne.

From 1853, Jakob and Marie Grützner lived at Westgarthtown and the Gründel family at Greensborough. Jakob and Marie were foundation members of the Westgarthtown Lutheran congregation and he donated money to various church causes and also served on the church committee. Jakob is said to have received religious training in Germany, but this has not been confirmed.

During the 1860s and 1870s, Jakob enlarged his dairy farm at Westgarthtown to over 125 acres, purchasing Lot 29 (42 acres) for £280 from Leberecht Fiedler in 1861; Lots 25-28 (28 acres) for £700 from Amos Drew in 1865; and Lot 30 (26 acres) for £400 from Leberecht Fiedler in 1872. He also purchased land and a general store in the Thomastown township and moved there during the 1870s

to live, leaving his sons to run the farm. Jakob and Marie had four children — Henry (1854–82), Anna (1856–71), John (1866–1929) and Maria (1870–1951) — before her death at Thomastown on 28 August 1890, aged 54. She was buried at Westgarthtown with her children Henry and Anna who predeceased her.

On 19 July 1893, at the Trinity German Lutheran Church, East Melbourne, Jakob married Frances Ladhams, a 28 year-old dressmaker of Northcote. They had two children — Evelyn (1893–1974) and Jacobena (1896–1980) — before his death at Thomastown on 20 November 1912, aged 88. Jakob was buried in the Methodist Cemetery at Thomastown and his estate was valued for probate purposes at £3,438.

Frances Grützner died on 6 August 1949 and was buried with Jakob at Thomastown. In 1919, Jakob and Frances' daughter Jacobena Grützner had married William Angliss, MLC (1865-1957), a wealthy butcher and meat exporter. William was knighted in 1939 and Jacobena awarded a CBE in 1949 and appointed a Dame Commander in 1975.



Heinrich Winter and Maria Grützner's wedding group, Thomastown, 2 March 1892. Jakob Grützner is standing in the back row, third from the left (Mr J. Paisley)

### Farm Building Display Panels

from PAGE 1

and my Mum's faithful old Kodak box camera.

We believed our project was a timely intervention in New Mecklenburg, as numerous buildings had already deteriorated or partly collapsed and future prospects for survival of those remaining looked dubious because of the threat of expanding suburban development.

On reflection, we must have appeared as a puzzlement to those still residing on their farms. Why would three nondescript students wish to carry out studies on buildings

which they regarded as relics, whose heyday had long expired. Traces of intrigue and slight suspicion soon gave way to acceptance and welcome, and we were permitted to enter the inner sanctums of the houses, having convinced the owners that their properties were of great architectural importance.

Our research work involved detailed measurement and recording of all the buildings, including sheds and barns. We viewed many remnants of the past, including farm artefacts, and tried to convince the owners that they were worthy of protection and preservation. Perhaps, even then, I was thinking of a future museum display. One artefact in particular was a hand-hewn stone feed trough

#### 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 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:tatianajoukoff@hotmail.com)

#### Trinity German Lutheran Church Archives, East Melbourne

If you had German Lutheran ancestors in Victoria, the Trinity Church Archives at East Melbourne may be able to help you.

The most commonly used records held by Trinity Church Archives are the marriage, baptism and confirmation registers, church minutes and correspondence. Information on many early members of the Trinity congregation is also kept.

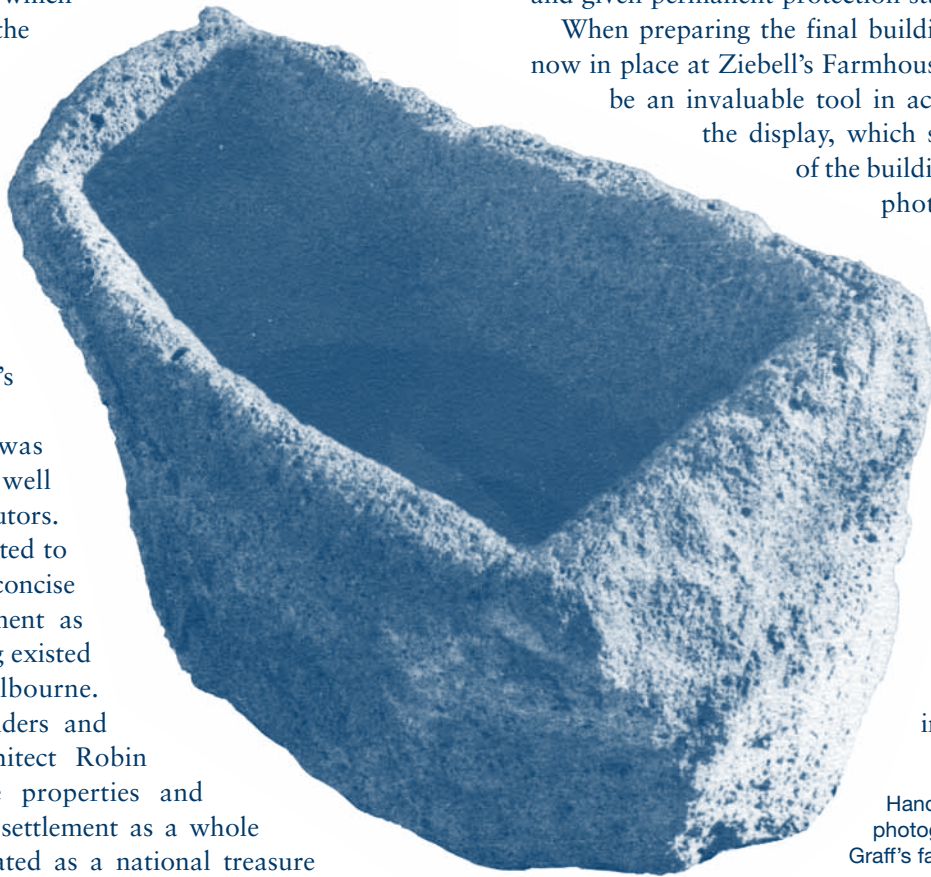
The Trinity Church Archives are located at 22 Parliament Place, East Melbourne Victoria 3002. Opening hours are Tuesdays from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. (Tel: 9639 8137).



at Graff's farm, which later ended up at the bottom of the farm's well.

At least, a good photograph was obtained and is a feature of one of the display panels at Ziebell's Farmhouse.

Our study was completed and well received by our tutors. They were fascinated to learn that such a concise and intact settlement as New Mecklenburg existed so close to Melbourne. Prof. David Saunders and the eminent architect Robin Boyd visited the properties and declared that the settlement as a whole should be nominated as a national treasure



Hand-hewn trough photographed at Graff's farm in 1959

and given permanent protection status.

When preparing the final building display wall panels now in place at Ziebell's Farmhouse, our study proved to be an invaluable tool in achieving authenticity in the display, which shows scaled drawings of the buildings, explanatory notes, photos and sketches. I think that the display well demonstrates how simple farm houses evolved around a common planning theme, and how using local materials can result in an enduring and cohesive architectural landscape, permanently set in time.

## Mernda estate honours Westgarthtown pioneers

Three new streets in Mernda's Villages Estate have been given names relating to people with early Westgarthtown connections. Scotsmen William Westgarth and John Stanley Carr helped Westgarthtown's German and Wendish settlers to purchase their land in 1850 and Wilhelm Alexander Brahe assisted them in legal matters.



# LOVE & Lace

## An exhibition of antique heritage clothing and demonstrations of lace making

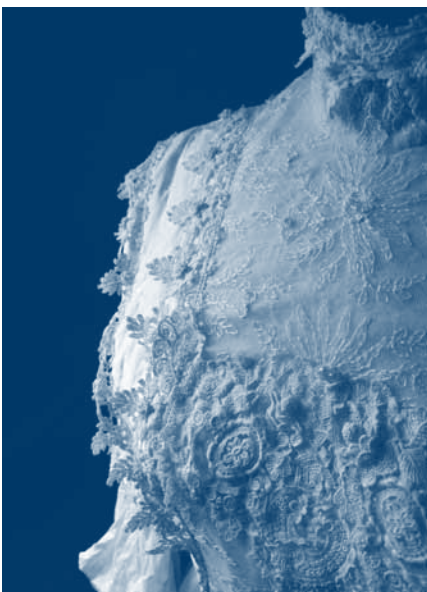
Sunday 20 November 2011 (1pm – 4pm)

As part of the City of Whittlesea's Cultural Heritage Program, the Friends of Westgarthtown will host a fascinating display of antique clothing with a beautiful and romantic history. Featured among the collection will be Minna Thiele's wedding dress, along with love notes between the bride and groom which date back to 1910.

Harry and Minna Thiele were both grandchildren of Christian Benjamin Finger, who emigrated from Germany aboard the *Pribislaw* and travelled to Australia with many of Westgarthtown's original settlers, arriving in Melbourne in 1850.

Following their marriage on 12 October 1910, Harry and Minna farmed at East Burwood, before moving to Blackburn, where they lived for the remainder of their lives. They had six children, a boy and five girls, the youngest of whom, Gladys Knight, donated Minna's wedding dress and the other personal items which form the basis of this exhibition.

The exhibition, which includes display panels, along with a demonstration of lace making, will take place from 1–4 pm on Sunday 20 November 2011. Afternoon tea will be available.



### FRIENDS OF WESTGARTHTOWN INC.

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|                |   |
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|                    |  |
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| Heritage Architect | <b>Geoff Borrack</b>                           |
| Tours Coordinator  | <b>Tatiana Joukoff</b>                         |
| Caretakers         | <b>Darren Kennedy</b><br><b>Sheryl Kennedy</b> |

|        |                      |
|--------|----------------------|
| Editor | <b>Rob Wuchatsch</b> |
| Design | <b>Léon Borrack</b>  |

Westgarthtown is the oldest and most intact German/Wendish settlement in Victoria. Established in March 1850, it celebrated 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.