



July 2022

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1. *Ian and Mick did the heavy landscaping.*

The Conservation begins!

We are so excited to be able to show you these photos - yes, the actual conservation of the cottage has finally begun!! Thursday the 14th was the big day, and the sun beamed down on our endeavours. Ian Grosser, from the Strait Gate Church Property Committee brought along his grader to do the heavy work. My heart is in my mouth just looking at the photos of the grader near the cottage! On Tuesday, Mick Seelander brought his big machines to move the soil where it needed to go. They both did an amazing job on the heavy-duty landscaping. Thanks, Ian and Mick, for generously donating your time.

Meanwhile, Andrew Steinkopf, the builder, oversaw the operations, and carefully dug with his shovel close to the cottage to make sure nothing was damaged. In the process he unearthed some remarkably intact redgum supports. Even though evidence of termite activity had previously been found around the cottage, they do not seem to have a taste for redgum, as the supports and the stable floor are both in good condition. (We treated the area for termites last year). He also discovered a brick path, which is more recent. We are still hoping for some artifacts from the 1800's, such as watches, candlesticks or teaspoons. We have been told there may even be a cellar in the vicinity!



2 *Andrew does the careful digging.*

Over the coming weeks, the roof will be replaced with new corrugated iron (necessary for protection of the cottage from the weather), and the structure will be made sound. Each beam will be checked, and if needed, a new beam that matches the original will be put in beside the old, without removing the original. In the conservation process, a key aim is to retain the original features in place.

Andy Grope, from our *Rechner Cottage Conservation Association* committee, has been driving down from Adelaide to be there, assist, and take photos to document the process. It's fascinating to be able to see what goes in to saving an old building and giving it new life.



We will keep you updated with photos as the process evolves. In the meantime, the need for funds for the work continues. If you can help with a donation, big or small, here's the link for tax-deductible donations, or message us for our bank details:

<https://artists.australianculturalfund.org.au/.../rechner...>

And, as always, we would like to thank all those who have donated already – big or small, your donations help immensely and have made this day possible. We are also immensely grateful to the organisations who have seen the value of the project and assisted with grants – the Barossa Council and the South Australian government through their Heritage Grants programmes, and the Peter Lehmann Arts and Education Trust.



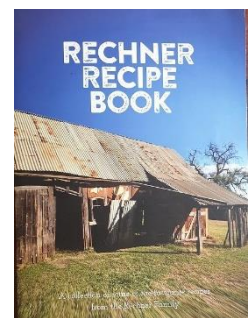
In fundraising news

Wines: Looking for some hearty reds to sip on these cold winter nights? Try a Rechner Cottage Shiraz. We have two to choose from – one from Ekhidna Wines, in the McLaren Vale (owned by GJ Rechner's great, great grandson), or one from Craneford Wines in the Barossa. The delicious Craneford 2016 GSM (which is consistently scored above 90 by James Halliday), is now sold out. However, they are currently bottling the 2017 vintage, which is equally as good, and that will be available very shortly.

Order forms and tasting notes are attached.

Recipe books: We sold out of these, but the good news is that we are able to have it reprinted. We can also now offer it as a downloadable PDF, for \$30. This is a great option as a gift for relatives overseas, to connect them with home and family.

Postage in Australia is \$14 – enquire for OS postage prices.



The People's Choice Community Lottery: \$1120 was raised through the lottery. Thank you to all who bought tickets.



3 An early primer used at Light Pass Lutheran School

The Lantern Walk

The *Barossa German Language Group* is dedicated to keeping the German traditions and language alive in the Barossa. One beautiful German tradition which they are celebrating this week is the *Lanternenfeste* – the Lantern festival.

This festival is held across Germany. Young children make lanterns, and process through the streets in the dark winter evening, swinging their lantern and singing traditional lantern themed songs. The procession finishes at a bonfire, with hot drinks for everybody – mulled wine for the adults, and perhaps hot chocolate for the children.

The *Laternenfest* is a secular version of *Martinstag* – a Christian celebration on 11th November held in honour of St Martin, a kindly Roman soldier, who, legend would have it, gave half of his cloak to a beggar in a snowstorm and then, having dreamt about Jesus, got baptised as an adult. For this reason, the processions are often led by a man on a horse dressed up as St Martin. St Martin's day came to signify the completion of winter preparations – harvesting, seeding, slaughtering. It was a time for people to eat their fattest cow or goose, depending on the region, to sing and be merry before beginning the long cold fast in the weeks until Christmas.

This charming illustration is from a German primer used in the Strait Gate Lutheran school in Light Pass in the early 1900's. It belonged to EG Stolz. I don't know if the community ever held a *lanternfest* (perhaps someone could tell me?), but they would certainly have known about the tradition. For many years, lessons at the school were taught in German. GJ Rechner was a strong advocate for children becoming proficient in English as well. During his 10 years as the schoolteacher at Immanuel school Light Pass in the 1850's, he attended English classes himself in the evenings, and taught English to both children and adults in the Light Pass community.

If you'd like to listen to (or sing along to) the lantern songs, this site has the words and songs.

[Songs for an Autumn Lantern Walk | Student Resource \(schoolhousebythesea.com\)](https://www.schoolhousebythesea.com)



GJ Rechner and Bertha Bergmann – A love story (Part 1)

What do we know about Bertha Rechner, GJ's wife? Not as much as we would like! But she and GJ shared a partnership of over 50 years together.

It was a partnership based on love, a shared faith and a shared devotion to their work.

It began quite romantically, back in Silesia, when GJ was 16 and she was almost 20. GJ had been apprenticed as a cloth cutter in his father's factory at Neukirch. "There worked the daughter of the master machinist Joseph Bergmann. With her clear voice and mild, kind eyes she had attracted the young man, who had advanced to the position of clerk in the factory. How she must have blushed, when she, the much courted, one fine day - in the presence of her mother - was handed a little bouquet by the much younger man, who without saying a word gazed deeply into her eyes".

They spent much time together discussing their faith, singing, and walking in the surrounding hills and cornfields.

However, at 17, GJ emigrated to Australia, leaving Bertha behind. He wrote her of the devastation he felt leaving her and how hard it was to look at "one who has become such a dear friend to me possibly for the last time..we shall, however, dearest, lay everything in His (God's) eternally rich fatherly hands...for what he does is well done in heaven and on earth". Even though he had professed to Bertha "I have often cherished the thought, what a delight it would be if I could one day obtain you as my companion through this life", he did not think it possible, as she was a Catholic and he a staunch Lutheran, who had sworn never to enter a mixed marriage. He did not want Bertha to renounce her Catholicism simply to marry him - issues of faith were too important for that.

GJ had been in Australia for three years and was by then working as the teacher at Light Pass School. He continued to write to Bertha and was overjoyed to hear that she had been received into the Lutheran Church 'out of the freest conviction".

On the 9th August 1850, his friends told him there was an arrival of crates for him at Port Adelaide. We can imagine his joy when he found out it was in fact, Bertha! With his longer hair and beard she did not recognize him straight away, but once she did, their joy was complete. They were married by Pastor Kavel on the 23rd October, 1850.

to be continued...

We are so glad to be able to bring you news of the conservation beginning. And we thank you for your continued interest and support.

Warm regards

Jo

(on behalf of the *The Rechner Cottage Conservation Association* Committee).