

October 2022

In this newsletter:

- **Christmas in Light Pass – in the 1800's.**
- **Our new website is here!**
- **Update on the Conservation**
- **In fundraising news...order in time for Christmas!**



The cottage reveals her inner beauty...

The verandah was sagging, as the verandah posts had no foundation and had slowly rotted. They needed to be raised and reattached. The roof beams were propped up and supports were put in place. They then lifted it and the porch posts were dangling out of the ground, like a large wooden wind chime. New supports were then put in place.



The verandah posts were hanging like windchimes.

for snow, but that is probably not so important in the Barossa....

Update on the conservation

As you can see, the conservation work is definitely in progress! Our beautiful cottage has been stripped back, with old bits of iron cladding and other non-original additions being removed. But, for an old lady of 170 years, her bone structure still looks great!



The verandah needed re-aligning

The roof was lifted, to reveal straw underneath. We believe that originally the cottage was thatched with straw. Straw may also have been used as insulation. The steeply pitched roof is a typical German architectural feature and allows room for a loft underneath. It also provides easy run-off



Straw is packed under the iron roof

There is a large loft area

And some unexpected finds..



Andrew uncovers a brick path.

Whilst carefully digging with a shovel around the outside of the cottage, Andrew (builder) discovered a brick path. A wall was also discovered, and it may prove to be the wall of a cellar. We didn't know there was one at the cottage, but some locals have confirmed its existence. We wait for more to be revealed!



This might be a cellar wall.



An original gutter bracket

Found on the cottage - this gutter bracket bears the initials BBH. We believe it stands for Bradley, Barrows and Hall, a British ironwork company in the 1800' s. Most likely the local blacksmith used their steel bars to make the brackets.

Now we are waiting... After an initial flurry of activity, conservation has now entered a waiting stage. The next thing to be done is replacing the roof with new corrugated iron, and we have to wait until the materials are in the country. We're hoping that's soon 😊

In the meantime, the boots are off, and we'll keep focusing on other things, like the podcasts and getting the website ready to launch. (Or maybe sitting back with a glass of Rechner Red 🍷 (still available for order).



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 acknowledge particularly Kate and Tony Rechner, for their generous donation.

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.



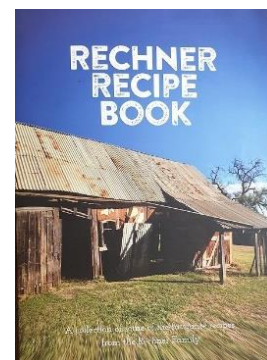
In fundraising news

Wines: Now's the time to start thinking about **ordering wines for Christmas** – either for your own table, or to give as a unique gift. We still have a great selection of wines to choose from, from Craneford Wines in the Barossa and Ekhidna Wines from Matt Rechner, a GJ Rechner descendent. In the early Barossa communities, producing and sharing a glass of wine was an important part of the social and cultural structure, and we are happy to continue that.

Order forms and tasting notes are attached.

Recipe books: Another great idea for Christmas gifts is the beautifully produced Rechner Recipe Book. It has lovely old family photographs scattered throughout. 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 \$15 – enquire for OS postage prices.



Presentation of the Recipe book to the Women's Guild.

Visit to the Strait Gate Congregation.

On September 11th, Robyn Windham (Rechner Cottage Conversation Association chairperson) visited Strait Gate Lutheran Church at Light Pass. Following the service, she presented Errol, chairperson for the Woman's Guild, with a Rechner Recipe book. The Woman's Guild has been instrumental in encouraging the conservation of the cottage.

Robyn then gave a presentation to the congregation on the progress of the conservation of the Rechner Cottage. The cottage is on church land and it is connected with their history. We are working with the congregation in the conservation process.



Robyn gives her presentation, with the beautiful stained glass window in the background.

Afterwards Robyn was able to attend a networking lunch with some of the Luhrs Cottage committee who have been extremely supportive and helpful.



Tom Reuther has shared great memories

Podcasts

As well as conserving the cottage, we are passionate about recording the stories and memories of the cottage and Light Pass. Oral histories are a great way to do this, as the character of the person who is sharing the memories really comes across – it feels like you are sitting with them and hearing their recollections of bygone times. We are keen to record as many as possible. So far we have a great collection of memories from Tom Reuther, whose childhood was spent at the manse in Light Pass in the 1930's and 40's. He is an engaging story-teller, and has fascinating memories of manse life, school-days, social events and life around Light Pass.

We have also recently had the opportunity to record Margaret Zweck, who lived in Light Pass in the 1970's and was instrumental in saving Luhrs Cottage from demolition. She too has great stories and information to share about both Rechner Cottage and Luhrs Cottage. We are so pleased that both these people (now in their 90's), are passionate about the history of the cottage and Light Pass and have done so much to preserve it for future generations.

Their recollections will soon be available on our website – in the meantime, we have attached one of Tom's memories for you to enjoy.



Margaret gifted us these beautiful small bone cutlery pieces, found at the cottage.



Some books had beautifully coloured illustrations

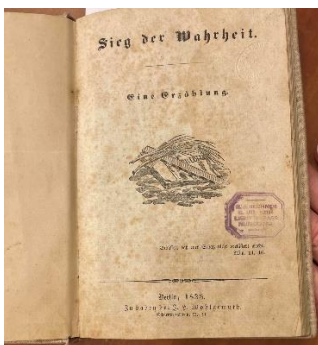
A day at the library

Robyn (busy lady!) took her father, Tom Reuther, to the Mortlock State Library to view the GJ Rechner collection of books. This collection was bought to Australia from Germany by GJ Rechner, and he used it to set up a lending library. You may remember we wrote about it in the last newsletter.

The earliest published book they saw was from 1842 - 6 years before GJ came to Australia. Robyn said, "it's hard to put into words the feeling of holding something that GJ held".

Notice the numbers recorded by GJ and his handwritten record of who borrowed the books. The stamp recognises that these are his books, and the hand sewn covers are amazing. Some of the books also had some beautifully coloured illustrations.

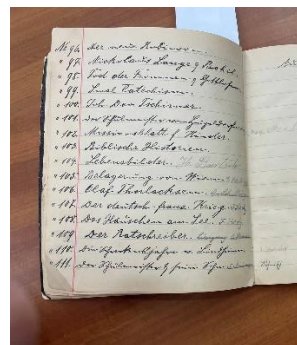
The collection is available to be viewed by appointment – contact the Mortlock library on (08) 8207 7250.



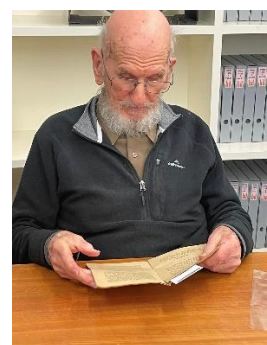
GJ's stamp is in the books



Hand-sewn covers



The borrowing register



It's lucky Tom reads German!

As always, we hope you and your families are well, and we thank you for your continued interest and support.

Warm regards

Jo

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

And a few more pics from on site, just to fill up the page!



Pondering....



Remember what it used to look like?



Supporting the beams inside