

October 2023

In this newsletter:

- Conservation news: Next job - the footings.
- Launching our new campaign.
- New Barossa wines from *David Franz* (at a special price just for us).
- You're invited to an excavation party!
- Andy's been on the radio, talking about the cottage.
- Strait Gate church members sip soup – and help raise money.
- The Agricultural Board – an important part of Light Pass History.

Conservation update:



Andy Grope took this photo of Catherine Baldwin with Michael Queale (Heritage SA), Sam Hosking (Barossa Council Heritage Advisor) and Andrew Steinkopf (Heritage Builder) as they met onsite to discuss options for the footings.

three such busy men all in the same place at the same time! Once we finally managed that, we were rewarded with their sound advice, and they all agreed on how best to proceed. But this involved changes to the original plan, requiring a new engineer's report and lodging a revised Development Application to council. So all that's eaten up much of the year, and here we are in October, finally able to begin. But it's an expensive job, and so we are launching a special campaign.

Keeping our feet on the ground,  
our next job is the footings.

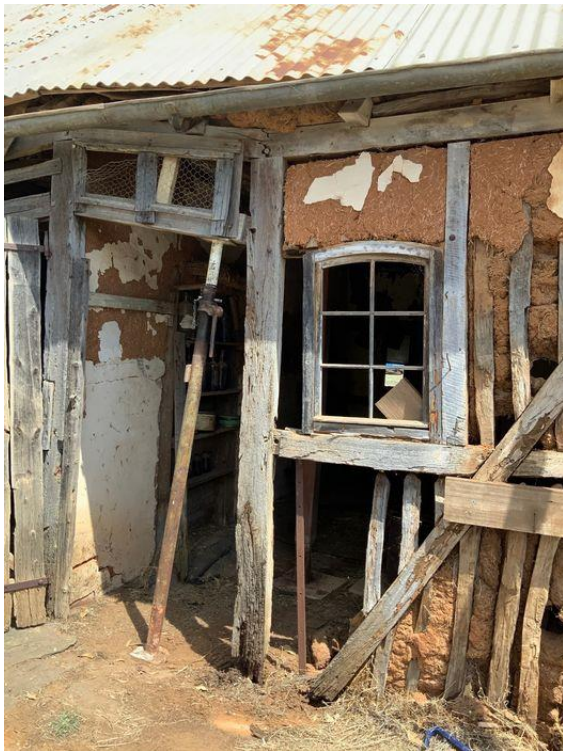
After the excitement of getting the new roof on, it has taken a long time to get to this step, but we have not been idle. Once the footings were uncovered, and the extent of their deterioration was realized (due to both water and termite damage), we could not proceed without a meeting onsite with Heritage SA, Council's Heritage Advisor, and our Builder. And, whilst we were keen and ready, it proved difficult to get

## A Foot of Footings

Be part of our exciting  
new campaign!

Read on to find out how.





## Join the campaign and leave a legacy.

So many things don't last these days, but here is a way you can be part of history and leave a legacy for someone you love. For \$100, you can donate to a foot of the wall around the cottage. Donate in your own name, or honour others in your family by making a gift in their name. You'll be able to see on a map of the cottage where your 'foot of footings' is. The name/s will be acknowledged on our website, and onsite once the cottage is completed. That could be an awesome gift for someone (Christmas gifts, maybe?)

There are 90 feet of footings around the cottage, and we are beginning at the front and working our way around.

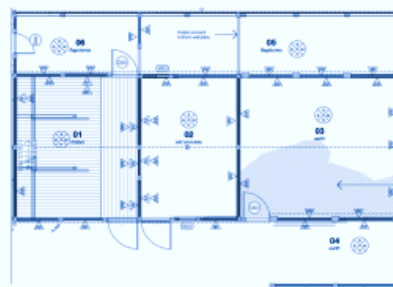
You can donate to the bank details below or securely via the website. ([rechnercottage.com](http://rechnercottage.com)). Please confirm via email who you would like to be acknowledged at [rechnercottage@gmail.com](mailto:rechnercottage@gmail.com).

### Bank details.

BSB: 704942

Account: 100964214

Name: Rechner Cottage  
Conservation Association.



### List of names.

1. Jon Smith
2. Janet Collins
3. Pearl Lacy
4. Your name here.....

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Speaking of Christmas, we have some great new wines for you, at a fantastic price, too.



With the end of the year coming up fast, it's a good time to think about wines for Christmas, for gifts, or just for summer drinking. And we have a great offer for you. David Lehmann ([david-franz.com](http://david-franz.com)) produces unique small batch parcels of Barossa wine, hand wrought with passion. He has offered us five of his delectable wines – a reisling, a semillon, a rosè, a cabernet sauvignon and a shiraz. All wines will be \$15 a bottle, instead of their normal retail price of \$30. You can buy them in packs of 2, or by the half-dozen. To order easily online, go to <https://rechnercottage.com/shop/>, or fill in and email us the attached order form.

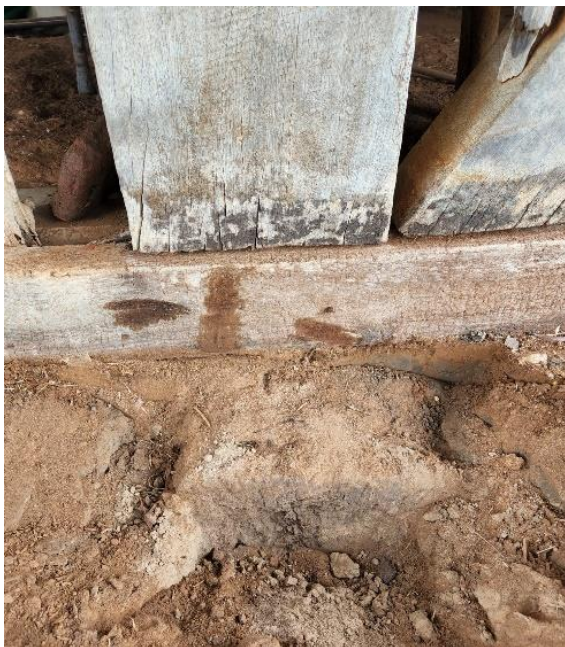
David is the son of Peter and Margaret Lehmann, who lived at The Willows in Light Pass for many years and loved the grapes produced locally. Their passion for Barossa history has been passed on, and following in this tradition, David has generously donated his wine to help support the conservation of the cottage. Which means you can enjoy his wines at fantastic savings, and all proceeds go directly to the cottage.

So put in your order, raise a glass, and contribute to something lasting.

## We're having a party – a 'digging party'.

### And you're invited!

The first step in the footing conservation is to carefully dig around each of the footings, mostly by hand or with a small shovel. So we are organising a 'digging party'. Andrew Steinkopf, the builder, will supervise, and anyone who can make it is invited to come along and join in. What a unique opportunity to be part of the conservation in such a hands-on way! It's a way to connect with the cottage's past, with those people from long ago whose hands first built it, and also to be part of its future. Refreshments will be provided, so let us know if you can join in the fun by emailing us at [rechnercottage@gmail.com](mailto:rechnercottage@gmail.com). Hope to see you there!



*Each footing needs to be carefully excavated. Who know what you might find!*

Interested? Here are the details you need to know:

**Date:** Friday 27<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October.

**Place:** Rechner Cottage, Strait Gate Church Grounds,  
Light Pass Road, Light Pass, SA.

**RSVP:** By email to [rechnercottage@gmail.com](mailto:rechnercottage@gmail.com)

**Dress Code:** Work gear.

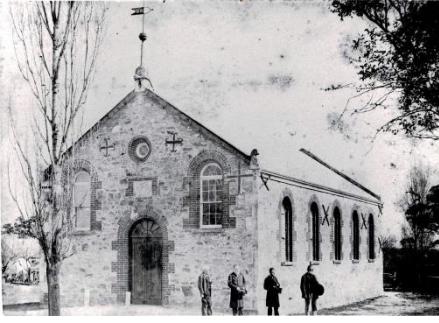
**BYO:** Gloves and shovel.



### Andy's been on the radio!

Andy Grope, one of our committee members, was interviewed earlier this year on Peter Goer's evening programme on ABC Adelaide radio. They wanted to find out more about Rechner Cottage and the conservation efforts, and Peter and Andy had a good old chat about the cottage and their personal contact with the people and goings on in the Barossa. You can catch the interview here:

Click [here](#) to listen to the interview.



**Soup's Up!** A big thank you to the wonderful folk of Strait Gate Church, Light Pass, who have been raising money for the conservation of Rechner Cottage by serving soup after the 9am Sunday services. Thank you to the wonderful soup makers, and all those who purchased and enjoyed it. We hope it warmed your souls on those cold mornings through winter – your fundraising efforts are much appreciated!

The photos show Strait Gate church through the years – The original church was of stone, with a thatched roof, and the bell tower was added in 1874. The new, modernist church was built in 1961, and designed by Erik Von Schramek. It has a beautiful stained-glass window behind the altar, best viewed in the afternoon when it is illuminated by the setting sun.



Read more about the church, and other historic buildings of Light Pass [here](#).

## The Light Pass Agricultural Bureau

*The Agricultural Bureau played an important role in Light Pass during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pastors JJ Stolz and Bert Reuther were both active members, as a way to be involved in the life of the community.*

Imagine you are a farmer (let's say 80 years ago) and you need to know how best to prune your vines and fruit trees, what varieties give the best yield, what's the latest in ploughing, and how to get rid of the dreaded potato caterpillar. No Google to ask, so where do you go to find out?

If you want to know what works on the farm, start by asking a farmer! And if you were a farmer in Light

Pass from 1923 onwards, a great way to do that would be by joining the local Agricultural Bureau.

In 1887, the SA government formed a committee to "inquire into measures to encourage among farmers .... products specially adapted to the soil and climate of South Australia that would give the greatest profits, promote employment, and increase the railway traffic".

One of the six outcomes was to create an Agricultural Bureau movement. Its aim was to improve and develop agricultural practices through the sharing of information and research. Other outcomes included the establishing of the Department of Agriculture, and the setting up of experimental farms. (The only outcome not achieved was the



*An old wagon at Luhrs Cottage*

establishment of a farm school for 'neglected' boys who would be trained as farm labourers – apparently there weren't enough neglected boys motivated to take up this offer!)

Initially, the best 12 farmers in each district were invited to form a branch of the Agricultural Bureau of SA. At its peak, there were 400 branches. Today, 150 branches still operate.

Branches met monthly, and their discussions were reported in the Adelaide Chronicle, so that all could benefit. For example, in March 1900 the Port Elliot branch discussed and reported the following useful information:



PTM larvae developing inside a tuber and emerging to pupate  
- S.I. Rondon, Oregon State University

*“The best means of protecting potatoes from the caterpillars of a small moth which gets into the bags, however closely they are tied. Mr. Fischet kept his potatoes free by putting them on a bed of seaweed and covering the surface with seaweed and soil. Attention was directed to the necessity for care in the selection of*

*seed. For wet ground whole seed was approved, though the largest tubers were obtained from cut setts. A variety known as North Pole is coming into favour in this district.*

### The Light Pass local branch

The Light Pass Branch was formed in 1923, and ran for 90 years, finally closing in 2013. Meetings were held in the local state primary school. It was an important forum for sharing knowledge and improving the skills of farmers. Tom Reuther, who grew up in Light Pass in the 1930's, says “The farms then consisted of orchards (apricots, peaches, plums, nectarines), picking fresh fruit when ripe and drying fruit, pruning by hand and selling produce. Very labour intensive! Nearly all farmers had vineyards requiring planting, pruning, picking grapes, transporting to wineries in horse drawn wagons. Nearly all farms had cows providing milk, butter, cream and cheese; pigs providing sausages, ham, bacon and pork; fowls and other farm birds providing eggs and meat – a self-sustaining life-style requiring hard work, long hours and many skills. The Agricultural Bureau provided a necessary support for this rural farm life and management”.



*The Ag Bureau played an important role in Light Pass.*

Skills were improved through talks by visiting speakers, demonstrations on everything from the latest tractors to new pruning methods and by running competitions. Junior competitions were also established, to improve skills and engender interest amongst the young.

Local research into farming techniques was an important part of the Bureau's work. The Light Pass farmers regularly conducted trials, researching the efficacy of products such as gypsum and white oil, the best use of fertilizers, and ways to deal with pests such as codling moth, starlings and sparrows. (A novel way they dealt with controlling the sparrow population was by paying local children one penny a dozen for sparrow eggs and three pence a dozen for heads).

The bureau also allowed farmers to take action as a group, especially when dealing with government departments. In the 1920's, Gummosis (a condition where sap leaks from the wound in a tree) was causing a lot of concern, In the Minutes we are told “a strongly worded protest was sent to the Department for not making an effort to deal with Gummosis. This resolution brought Mr Samuels of the Waite Institute post haste into the district to investigate.”

Conferences of local branches were held, and this also gave further opportunity for them to take action as a group. For instance, the Light Pass branch put forward a resolution in 1928 that “Conference pledge itself to use its influence to prevent the control of dried apricots, peaches, pears and prunes being vested in the AOFA”.

It was not only farmers who attended – Pastors JJ Stolz and Bert Reuther were also members. As Pastor Reuther's son, Tom, remembers “my father wanted to know and understand his people's needs, their challenges and their lifestyle”.

In 1923 Pastor Stolz gave an interesting talk on his trip to Central Northern Territory, giving his impressions on the land, people, and development in the region.



### **The Women's Agricultural Bureau.**

Women on the land provided important support to each other and the community through the Ag Bureau.

The women of Light Pass did not want to miss out. In 1953, some ladies began attending meetings with their husbands. I don't know what the men thought of their sacred men's group being infiltrated, but they did politely suggest that the women might like to form their own Women's branch. (The first Women's Agricultural Bureau was formed in 1917, and this was the first rural women's group of its kind in Australia. At its peak there were 84 branches with 2565 members).

It did not take long for the Light Pass women to form a branch and to find a free venue in which to hold their meetings, with trading tables and supper for those who came from long distances. There was often a guest speaker, and visits were exchanged with other branches. Some of the topics discussed in 1954 were 'women's activities on the land in Southern Germany' 'seed raising and growing plants from cuttings' 'First Aid' 'the making of Wills' 'show cookery' and 'home aid'. Although these topics weren't directly related to agriculture, they certainly would have been helpful for those living on the land.

The aims of the Women's Bureau were:

1. To stimulate interest in the development of rural life, particularly in agriculture.
2. To acquire knowledge concerned with matters having importance in and around the home.
3. To encourage cultural interests among members.
4. To develop in women an awareness of the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship.
5. To promote goodwill, friendship and understanding through service.

They raised money for charities through activities such as 'trash and treasure' stalls and by publishing a recipe book. They had a great time going on outings and found time to cater for the supper at the Men's Branch Annual Social.

The Women's Bureau continued meeting until 2003. They were a talented, lively, and dedicated group of women, who gave many years of service to the Light Pass Community. The group recognized six Life Members, who had each given more than 20 years of service to the community.

### **The Influence of the two Agricultural Bureau's in Light Pass.**

For much of the 1900's, the Agricultural Bureau played an important role in the community of Light Pass. It promoted friendships, service and community spirit, and was an important forum for community matters. It helped improve



*Luhrs Cottage display during History Month '23.*

agricultural practices in the district and promoted the sharing of knowledge and working together to solve common problems. Now times have changed, and there are different ways to share knowledge and to be involved. Many community groups struggle for in-person attendance at meetings, but we hope the cohesiveness and common purpose which groups such as the Agricultural Bureau provided to their communities is not lost.

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Warm regards to you all

Jo

(on behalf of the *Rechner Cottage Conservation Committee*)

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*Sunshine on the stable floor.*