



December 2023



In this newsletter:

- Conservation news: Work on the footings is well on the way!
- Fundraising - Leave a legacy in someone's name.
- Vale, Judy Gale Rechner.
- Rechner history and genealogy book available again.
- Christmas traditions - the Advent Calendar and Wreath.
- Journeys - Stephen Rechner goes to Lake Kilpananinna.



Volunteers at the digging party – Thank you all for your hard work!

Conservation update:

Work on the footings is leaping ahead.

We're very happy to report that work on the footings is progressing quickly. After our successful digging party, where a team of volunteers worked hard to clear away the soil from around the footings, the builder was able to get straight to work. Following the advice of the State Heritage advisor and the Heritage architect, different approaches have been taken to the footings at the front and the back, in order to keep costs down whilst still showcasing what we can. Along the back wall of the cottage a concrete base has been laid for the footings to rest on, preserving them

from water damage. The corrugated iron that was along the back wall will then be reattached. The footings along the front will be individually treated, splicing the wood into galvanized iron stirrups where necessary. Thus protected, they can remain exposed so that the posts and their weathered character can be seen, as well as the methods of construction.

Catherine visited the cottage whilst Andrew (the builder) and his assistants were working, and she told us of the care with which they treated each individual footing and downward piece of wood. They studied each one, and felt around underneath, and exclaimed with excitement at the differences they found. They are loving working on our beautiful cottage and being part of preserving the work of those who first built it.

Now we just have to pay for it! As with any historic project, the conservation requirements are revealing themselves as the work progresses. Once soil was removed and the footings could be clearly seen, we could see that the damage was greater than anticipated, requiring more painstaking work to be done. The costs are higher than expected, and in order to complete this stage of the project, we will require extra funds. We would hate to call a halt



Taking a close look

to the work, after we have all waited so long to see it happening, so we are reaching out. We understand times are hard for many people, but if you are able to, please consider donating.



One way to help - Donate to our 'foot of footings' campaign.

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. Names are acknowledged on the website, and onsite once the cottage is completed.

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

This is a wonderful way to honour the memory of family members who have passed on, or to connect the younger generation to their history and their ancestors. Or simply a way to put your own name to something you see as valuable, and worth conserving.

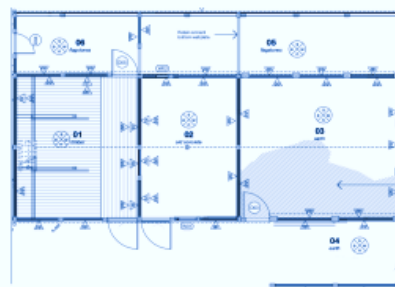
You can donate to the bank details below or securely via the website. (rechnercottage.com). Please confirm via email (rechnercottage@gmail.com) who you would like to be acknowledged.

Bank details.

BSB: 704942

Account: 100964214

Name: Rechner Cottage
Conservation Association.



Plan of Pastor Rechner's Cottage

List of names.

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



Get ready for summer with fresh whites and rosè.

Wine news.

Well, there's good news, bad news and then good news. The first good news is that our fundraising wine (generously supplied by David Lehmann of David Franz winery) has been extremely popular! Thank you to all who have purchased it, and we hope you have been enjoying it.

The 'bad' news is that the reds and the reisling are now sold out.

However, the other good news is that we still have a limited amount of Semillion and Rosè available. Crisp and fresh tasting, they will be perfect chilled on those hot summer days.

There are not many left, so don't delay in ordering. You can buy them in packs of 2, or by the half-dozen (best value, as postage is the same). Go to <https://rechnercottage.com/shop/> to order easily online or fill in and email us the attached order form.



Vale, Judy Gale-Rechner

23/09/1944 - 08/04/2023

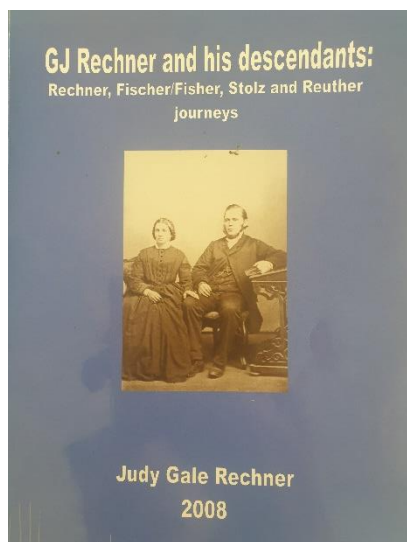
It is with sadness that we remember the passing in April this year of Judy Gale-Rechner. Judy was an accomplished historian and researcher, who produced the amazing Rechner Family bible "*GJ Rechner and his descendants: Rechner, Fiscsher/Fisher, Stolz and Reuther journeys, 2008*". So much of history being preserved depends on the work of a few individuals who take it upon themselves to put in the time, energy and commitment needed, and Judy was one such person.

As well as being passionate about Rechner family history, Judy's interests were wide-ranging. She completed teacher training and taught for many years. Later she returned to study and completed a Masters in History at Queensland University. She specialised in research in the areas she loved - heritage, the built environment, land tenure and local histories. She freelanced as a researcher for many years, and was prolific in writing many articles, papers and books. She also loved to travel and was heavily involved with Firbank Grammar School.

Judy's book is our go-to book for information about the Rechner family. It has the genealogy of all the descendants up until 2008 (what a task that must have been, to compile and organize all that information). It has photos of many of them, and it's interesting to read about the course of family member's lives. Often there is a common thread that can be traced back to GJ and Bertha's children, with some lineages having a more business-focused bent, and others leaning towards educational pursuits or careers in the church. Music is a theme that runs through many of the lineages, and again, that can be traced back to GJ Rechner, who was church cantor for many years, and had a thorough enjoyment of music. Having all this information laid out in one book is such an important resource for the whole Rechner family, and we are so grateful to Judy for this gift.

The book also has a fascinating, detailed history of GJ Rechner - his life and work - as well as a section explaining the origins of the Rechner family. Another section talks about the social and political history of the

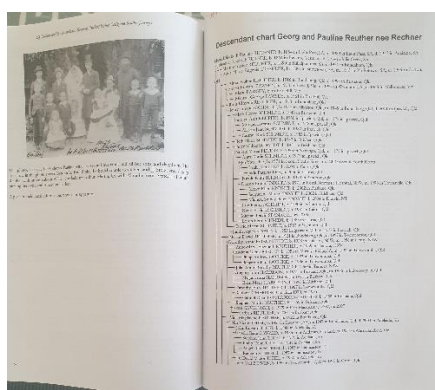
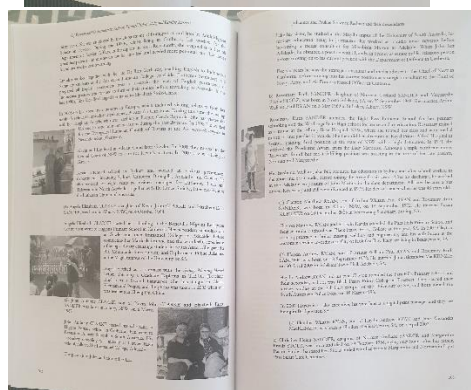
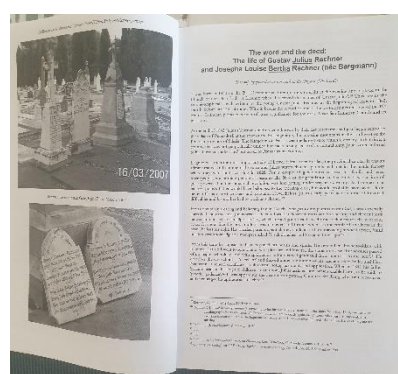
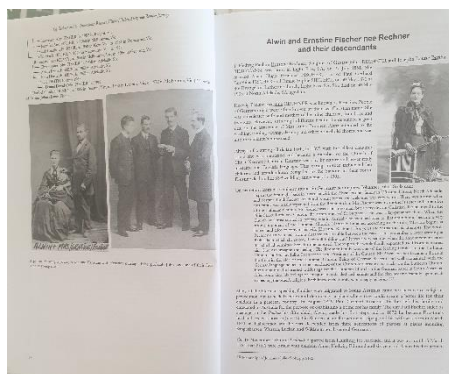
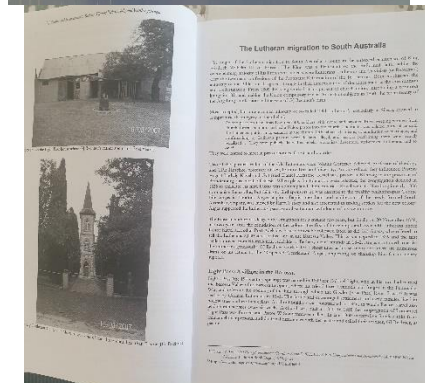
regions in Europe from which the family came. Compiled by Peter Rechner, it's well-written, easy to read, and brings to life the people and the times.



Rechner history and genealogy book - available until sold out.

Judy's family has generously donated Judy's remaining copies of the Rechner book for us to sell, with proceeds going towards the cottage. They are \$35, which includes postage. If you haven't got a copy, don't miss out! Use the order form attached.

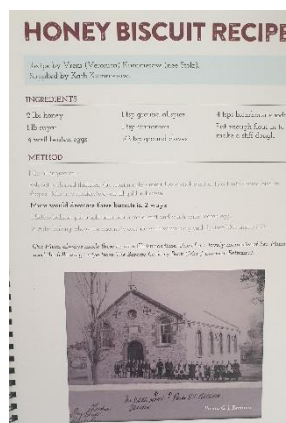
Take a browse through my old, well-thumbed copy...

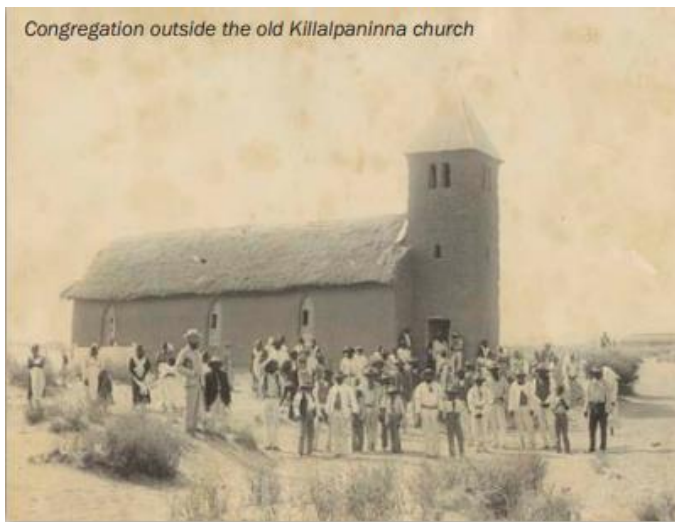


Thinking of making honey biscuits for Christmas? It's one of the recipes in the *Rechner Recipe Book*.

By the way, you can still order copies of the book using the order form or online. Or email us if you'd like a typed copy of this recipe.

Happy baking!



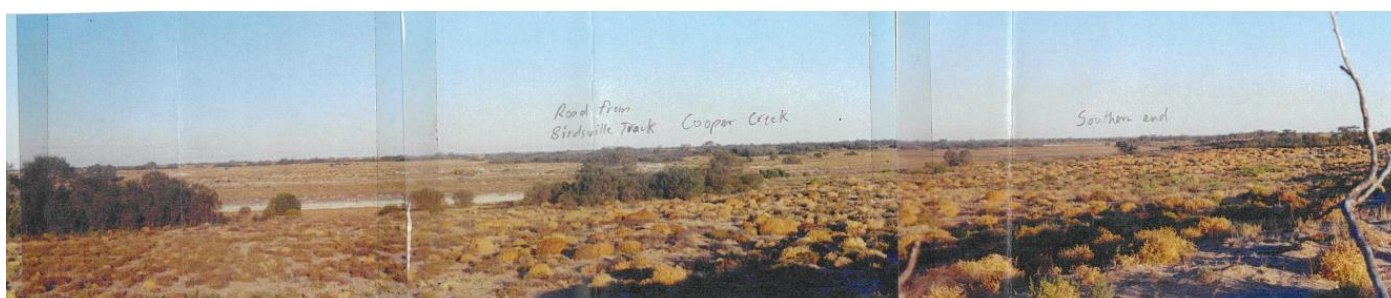


Congregation outside the old Killalpaninna church

Christmas is a time of journeys – Mary and Joseph, the wise men – perhaps you too are travelling. But have you ever made a journey to see a place of significance in the history of your family? Where did you go, and how was it? Did you feel a sense of connection there? Stephen Reuther, a Rechner descendent, makes a journey to Bethesda Mission, Lake Killalpaninna, Central Australia. This is the place where his great-grandfather (son-in-law to GJ Rechner) lived and worked as a

missionary from 1888-1906. At one stage the mission was a thriving community, consisting of 25 buildings, plus stockyards. However, it closed in 1915, so what will Stephen find there now? Read on:

Stephen writes "The idea of travelling to Lake Killalpaninna came upon the passing of my late father, Pastor Martin David Reuther in May, 1997. During his life, he had mentioned his missionary grandfather, Rev. Johann Georg Reuther, over the years and would have liked to have seen Killalpaninna himself but never made the journey. It was this 'unfinished business,' that inspired me to do the trip."



The Birdsville track to Cooper's Creek – Stephen and Ted marvelled at the stony gibber plains.

He set out from Toowoomba in 1999 with his friend, Ted. They had an interesting journey through the outback, going along the Birdsville track, and marvelling at the stony gibber plains. Crossing Coopers Creek was easy (no water!) "Eventually, we came to the gates of the Etadunna Station We made our campsite between the higher ridge of where the mission church once stood, and the bank of the lake. Also up on the higher ground were a few graves, one of whom is of my Great Uncle who died as an infant, Georg Edwin Reuther. As it was late, we organised our meal and rolled out our swags and slept under the stars. The night sky was impressive and knowing that we had arrived at the mission gave us a feeling of contentment.

We were up early, keen to explore the site before the midday heat came. We walked northerly along the lake to the broad saltpan. Before long, our feet were crunching through the salty, surface crust of the lake and thought it best to keep to



The site of the old church, and the graves.

the edge. A large number of emus soon appeared and being curious, came closer and closer. A lot of them were the best part of 6 foot tall and were encroaching upon us, so we turned back.

Heading back to the mission site, I noticed an old straggly tree sitting at the highest point of the mission. It was near here, according to historical maps, that a house once stood where my Great Grandparents, Johann and Pauline (Stolz widower, nee Rechner) once lived. It wasn't conclusive but I thought I could make out an almost ground level corner of the house.

We re-examined the commemorative cairn to the mission church, and the four graves. The largest of whom was of Missionary Vogelsang. From this point and being on higher ground, I noticed that it had a good view of Lake Killalpaninna in its entirety.



Stephen poses next to the remains of the old blacksmithing shed.

Walking around to the east, we found the remnants of the blacksmithing shed. It was of a long, rectangular shape with several crooked, wooden posts still standing. Each post had a fork at the very top where cross beams would have once rested.

I also noticed a square area that was fenced off directly south of the church. I did not know the significance of this. It may have been a burial ground.

In the southern part of the mission site, we found rusted pieces of metal, some old ground level wooden posts that

seemed to shape the perimeter of a hut or house. One unexplained small, square clearing that was devoid of vegetation, with and ground being a darker brown. A single shoe plough was found, the metal circular rings of former wagon wheels, a little chicken wire, a piece of rusted corrugated iron, the odd bottle, and general bits and pieces.

Heading south on the Birdsville track again, I reflected on our forebear's ambition and determination to establish the Bethesda Mission. Although it did not endure, the time there produced a lasting legacy and that is of extensive, written records. The Dieri's laws, social customs, and culture were noted by my Grand Grandfather, among others, and are now kept at the South Australian Museum. "

Editors note: This is an extract. Read the full account of Stephen's trip at the website (rechnercottage.com) and then follow that with the account written by Pastor JJ Stolz 100 years ago, of his journey to the missions in Central Australia. He has many interesting observations of the land and people at the time.

Bethesda mission was established by German missionaries in the remote area of Central Australia in 1865. It faced many challenges during it's time, although when Stephen's great-grandfather was there it thrived under his energetic leadership. However, by 1915 extended droughts and accumulated debts forced the mission to close and be sold. As Stephen mentioned, Pastor Reuther was passionate about preserving the Dieri culture and language and, with his wife, translated the New Testament into the Dieri language.

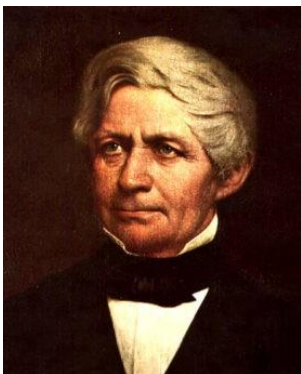
You can read an interesting and brief history of the mission at [killalpaninna_panel_mission_story4_final.pdf \(environment.sa.gov.au\)](#)



German Christmas Traditions

Many traditions of the Christmas season (including the Christmas tree and baubles) have their origins in Germany and would have been enjoyed by the early Lutheran settlers.

Perhaps you've put up an Advent Calendar. Did you know this tradition – as well as that of the Advent wreath – was begun by a Lutheran pastor?



Pastor Wichern

The Advent Wreath

In 1839 a German Lutheran pastor, Pastor Johann Hinrich Wichern, ran an orphan asylum in Hamburg. He wanted to make the anticipation of Christmas more pleasant for his children. So he placed candles on a wooden wheel hub - twenty small red candles around the outside, and four large white candles. Every evening he and the children gathered together and lit one of the candles, and then spent time praying and singing together. The children must have really looked forward to it! The red candles were lit on weekdays, and the four white candles were lit on Sundays.

As the custom caught on, the Advent wreath was eventually created out of evergreens, symbolizing everlasting life in the midst of winter and death. The circle reminds us of God's unending love. Now it has just 4 candles around the outside, and each candle represents a theme – hope, love, joy and peace. Every Sunday in Advent, another candle is lit. There may also be a candle in the middle – the Christ candle – which is lit on Christmas Eve.



The wheel of candles helped children prepare for Christmas



Marking the days.

The Advent Calendar

People loved the idea of marking down the days, and soon found different ways to do it. At first, many people kept track of the days by making chalk marks on their door, which were rubbed off one by one as Christmas got closer.

Lighting Advent Candles or putting up a small religious picture in the window each day were other ways of counting down the days. Some people prepared a crib for the baby Jesus by adding a piece of straw each day.

The first actual Advent calendar was produced in the early 1900s. Mass production began in 1908 by Gerhard Lang, who worked at the Reichhold & Lang printing office in Munich, Germany. Soon many different styles were produced, usually lavishly decorated. Gerhard remembered how, when he was a child, his mother created an Advent board for him on which she placed 24 biscuits and let him eat one each day. This gave him the idea of having gifts or chocolates hidden away, to keep the children's attention (works for adults, too!). **In 1930**, Lang initiated the production of chocolate box-like Advent Calendars with 24 windows filled with chocolates. The idea proved to be an incredible success!



Chocolates are always welcome....



The Advent Wreath is full of symbolism.

Does your family have an Advent calendar? Today there are many different ways of marking the days in this wonderful season of the year. No matter how you count down (or perhaps don't), may each of these days be full of the hope, love, joy and peace symbolised by the Advent Wreath candles.

Thank you for your continued support and interest throughout the year. We hope you feel a part of the conservation effort, as the cottage and its history are a part of our shared past, as well as a part of the future we wish to build. We look forward to all the next steps along the way, and to the day we can send you an invitation to the opening!

A very happy Christmas to you all!

Jo

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



Children visit the cottage and learn about its history



Email: rechnercottage@gmail.com

Website: rechnercottage.com

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