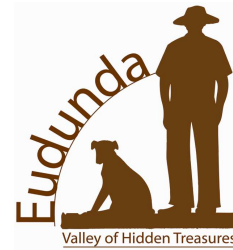




GUSTAV'S NEWSLETTER

Eudunda Family Heritage Gallery
17-19 Bruce Street, EUDUNDA SA 5374
Opened: Friday/Saturday 10am-4pm Sunday 11am - 4pm
Phone: (08) 8581 1552 email: EFHG@bigpond.com
web www.eudundaheritage.com



POSITION	PERSON	CONTACT
President & Local Historian	Jim Reese	Ph: (08) 8581 1268
Secretary	Irene Hall	Ph: (08) 8581 1306 Email: ithall@bigpond.com

No. 28 FEBRUARY 2009

Welcome to our Newsletter and a Happy New Year from all the Eudunda Family Heritage Committee. We hope you all had a joyful festive season with family and friends.

We would like to thank Michael Stapleton for his great article in our December issue which was very popular with everyone. It was our first 'sell-out' Newsletter and we had to do a reprint!! We hope you enjoy this one just as much!!

Our congratulations go to Joan Latz on being named Citizen of the Year-Eudunda Ward.

Joan has worked quietly and tirelessly over the years for many committees including the Eudunda Family Heritage Committee and we are very proud of her achievement, which is so richly deserved. Good on you Joan.

HERITAGE HAPPENINGS

Our Annual Friends of The Gallery Morning Tea is on Wednesday, February 11th. As we have been getting such wonderful turn-out we have decided to hold it this year in the Eudunda Hall (next to Eudunda Club).

It will be the usual starting time of 10.30. All the Committee members really get excited about our 'Friends' Morning Tea. We really appreciate all the support you show us through the year and we consider

it a privilege to be able to express our thanks to each of you.

Please remember to wear your name tags and, as membership is due, think about becoming a 'Gold' Friend of the Gallery. Gold Membership covers you for 10 years and costs \$100. Alternatively you could take out 3 year membership for \$30. Thank you again for your continuing support and we look forward to seeing you there.

History Week will be held from 22nd May until 31st May 2009. Please mark these dates in your diary NOW!! This year our theme will be Cemeteries of the District. Full details will be in the May newsletter. Your contributions to the next newsletter, as always, are very welcome!

AROUND THE ROOMS

We have purchased a Compactus sliding filing cabinet for archival storage. This is going to make the world of difference to our filing and archival storing capabilities. Enquiries have been made to line the shed roof to eliminate some of the dust problem. Unfortunately the cost was so exorbitant we could not continue with the project. Perhaps some other solution may be found.

Terry has covered some of our shelf display area with Perspex to protect the items from dust.

Sadly due to vandalism the Gustav logo at Laucke's Mill had to be replaced.

A lot of the excerpts from this newsletter come from the books and booklets we have for sale in The Gallery, telling of life in our local schools in the early days of education in this district. These make fascinating reading, are inexpensive and well worth coming into the Gallery to look at, and buy. While you are there, have a look through the book which was made with stories collected by Mary Hutchinson and also have a look through the rooms and see our wonderful new signage.

GALLERY GOSSIP

As this newsletter is going to print, fellow Committee member, our dear trusty Dot, is in hospital for her hip replacement. I am sure you will all join with us to wish Dot a speedy recovery, tho not too speedy Dot, take it easy!! We all know the commitment Dot has for our town and the non-stop work she puts in to help our town, and know exactly what we are saying!! We are thinking of you Dot.

We are very please to report Carol is on the road to recovery.

We received an email from Rev. Christopher Ridings and he is happy for us share it with you.

I have been fortunate to have been sent a copy of No 27 Dec 2008 of Gustav's newsletter and would like myself to join as a subscriber. (we have sent Chris a membership form)

I am a grandson of A G & Mary Wiesner, and we left Eudunda in 1951.

My great-grandfather was Johannes Gottlieb Wiesner who came to Eudunda in 1882.

He was an early president of the Eudunda Club.

I was particularly interested in Michael Stapleton's reminiscences.

As I left in 1951, my recollections are much in the late 1940s, but most of the businesses were still there.

However Alf Post was the barber then and he had all the joys of trying to get me to sit still and not fidget during my 9d haircut.

He married Dorothy Biele, my kindergarten teacher, who, through the Gehling line, was my Mother's 3rd cousin. Charlie Handke, butcher and footballer was best man and I went with Mum to the High Lutheran Church and sat in the gallery to watch my very first wedding and the man continuously pumping the organ during the hymns.

My family connections there were through the Wiesner, Nitschke, Gehling lines and connections with the Hilbigs.

John Woodward of the Light Hotel married Ruth Hilbig, Mum's 2nd cousin on the Nitschke side.

I probably have oodles of distant cousins in the area not to mention relatives of relatives.

I used to go to school each morning with Jim and the now late Leon Reese who then lived in Lloyd St (named after my uncle). We would pass Gus Thiele's place in Barwell Street where Gus would sit on his front verandah often playing his violin. I did not know for years that his nephew Colin stayed there for his later schooling. Gus would sit by the front door in Grandpa's shop (Wiesner & Co). Is he the Gustav of your newsletter?

I'm sorry to hear Carol Reese is unwell. Would you please pass on my best wishes to her and Jim?

shalom
Chris
Rev Christopher N Ridings

In this newsletter we discover or rediscover some of the childhood activities, mischief, games and pastimes enjoyed in days gone by in this area. A common theme running through many of these stories is... the parents always found out!!

If these stories trigger your childhood memories please jot them down and post or drop them into the Gallery at 19 Bruce St Eudunda,

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG...

We got up to some tricks us lads
We lit this fire one summer
In the hay yard
She only smoldered
Thank God
Grandfather saw the smoke and went
hysterical
They came down with buckets of water
And put it out
Got a heck of a hiding from Mum
And when Dad got home Gee we got it
worse
Clem Loffler/ Mary H

During the warmer months a number of the children would come to school barefoot to school. The yard was fairly stony and there were often plenty of skun toes and knees. Periodically all the children had to form a long line and pick up the stones. It was called an Emu Parade.

The boys mainly played cricket and marbles also skipping a long rope swung by one child each end. You could hop in the centre. The rope was swung faster and faster (they called it pepper).

The girls played Hopscotch, Skipping, Wringle Wringle Rosie and Knuckle-Bones. Boys and girls hardly mixed with sport and games, which could only be played during lunch and recess break. In my school days there were school bullies they still exist today.

I still remember several school concerts. All the desks were taken out, a stage was built in front with kero boxes, planks and forms for parents and friends to sit on. The school was packed for the occasion. A yearly picnic was also enjoyed. The parents would view our work in the morning and then proceed to Grosers' scrub by the salt creek and have our cut lunch under the shade of the pepper trees and pines. In the afternoon races etc for the young and old. I remember picnics held on the side of the road opposite the school. A great event was the Rooster chase.

Children would receive an orange raffle, also some sweets. If you won a race 6d (sixpence) for first, 3d (threepence) for second. It was always an enjoyable day.
Clem Loffler/ School Days at Neales Flat 1874 – 1942

Most children walked to school and sometimes took shortcuts through farm property. One year the crops were high, which was an ideal place to play 'hide and seek'! The children were surprised one morning when the owner of the crop jumped out holding a stock whip. The children sure got to school early that morning.

School Days at Neales Flat 1874 - 1942

We lost our garters once,
Me and Eloise,
We got a good hiding,
We had to look for them but we never
found them
Unknown/ Mary H

When I was a young mischievous little boy, I had to be entertained. My younger brother and I and maybe the odd friend would wander over to the town dump, which was only small walk from our house. There used to be a few old cars in a small hollow. Then came our fun. We would get rocks and smash the leftover windscreens of the wrecks. I loved the sound of smashing glass. It just made me want to throw more rocks. We went there again one day, thinking nothing was different. Away we went, but then we heard a grumpy attendant at the dump. We were busted. That wasn't the worst part. That came after, when our parents found out.

Yr 11 student EAS 2000/ Mary H

Often children would wag the day from school. One day two boys began playing in the Narcoota Creek, after it had rained the night before.

After awhile they realised they would be late for school and returned to their homes. They told their parents the water in the creek was too high to cross, in order to go to school. Instead they stayed home for the day. It was only at church on Sunday that their parents found out that they hadn't told the truth. You can guess what happened to the boys.

School Days at Neales Flat 1874 - 1942

We had a double swing constructed from stout tree trunks. Our games were rounders, marbles, shops, chasey, hide and seek. Once a week we had P.T. (physical training).

During World War 2 we collected bones and wool for the Schools Patriotic Fund (SPF). The wool was from dead sheep in the paddocks, it didn't bother us to do this. Participants received badges with little bars to attach to them.

Once a month we were marched to the Eudunda Farmers Store, to the scales there, where we were weighed and measured in height.

In 1951, there was the Eudunda District combined Schools Jubilee Display on the Eudunda Oval to celebrate 50 years of the Federation of Australia. We took part in the Special Celebration Day.

We wore a coloured cape, the outline of Australia was marked on the oval, and at a given signal we crouched down, presenting a coloured outline of Australia. We participated in a mass drill display with all the other schools. The Eudunda children did a Maypole Dance, and we all preformed the German Clap Dance.

The Exhibition Train came to Morgan; we were taken to see that.

Robin and I rode our bikes to and from school. Kids parties were very, very few as we all had jobs to do at home, and those who rode 4 miles had more to do than Robin or me.

Bower and Mount Mary Schools combined for concerts. The most talked about item for years was 'Widdicombe Fair' where Mr Lunnay made a horses head. Mum sewed a horse's body from hessian. The head was covered with hessian on it's wire frame, the tongue moved, the ears wiggled...it brought the house down.

Yabbying in the dams was a highlight of our lives, so was fishing at Morgan. The adults did the fishing, we played in the cliffs at Bryants Creek, and explored the old barges left to die there.

Wirths circus was a slight to see as it drove past our house. The elephants were hobbled in chains, and stood sideways on the truck (or semitrailer) trays, no sides to the vehicle, just these lovely creatures watching the world go by, with their trunks gently swaying. The lions were in their cages, and I could see them too. The vehicles crawled along. We'd go to Morgan to see Silvers Circus, and Eudunda to see Wirths Circus.
Margaret Rogers / Mary H

With my two sisters and two brothers I would do a lot of tree climbing. Had a lovely big White Lucerne tree. Loved playing in the haystacks and also the chaff shed. Hid in the freshly cut chaff. Played nurses and doctors.

At school we would play knucklebones, hopscotch, hide and seek, oranges and lemons, and we skipped a lot. Had picnics in Jenke's scrub off the Morgan road. We competed in the egg and spoon race, thread the needle, wheelbarrow race, sack race, chase the rooster, slippery pole. I think the winners got a sixpence. Once a year we'd go down on the train for a beach picnic at Semaphore. We loved that.
Erna Handke/ Mary H

Guy Fawkes day was a good excuse for young boys to light fire crackers. One boy took crackers to school and scared the teacher who unexpectedly came in the door at the wrong time..... POP, BANG, CRACK
School Days at Neales Flat 1874 - 1942

When I was a little fella going with the dad to Julia, with the posts on the wagon, I wanted to take some playthings. So each trip I'd find something and shove it on the back amongst the wood and of course once it was there it was alright, you wouldn't take it back again. I thought I was very brainy then. One thing I put on was an old sausage machine. It had two rollers and I used to turn it.
Ben Obst/ Mary H

I'd go home on weekends. At home we picked up the eggs, milked the cows, made our own fun. Eventually we had a tennis court in our backyard. The boys'd play cricket.

We weren't allowed any luxuries ever. Families were bigger. We played all sorts of card games. Reading. People visiting for Sunday dinner, that was very common. We did a lot of walking. Teenage years we had home parties. I had a bike that I rode to Sutherlands school to play basketball.

When I was about fifteen I went with a friend to the Eyre Peninsular- you wouldn't think of doing that today. We weren't frightened of anybody. Picnics- we'd go out to someone's property on the back of a truck. As many kids as you like. We'd have races. We'd have a lovely time.

One incident I remember from school is when the head teacher spotted the boys climbing out of a window. In those days the windows were about three feet off the ground and not so wide either. However as he saw this, the teacher made the boys return to the classroom, and with strap in hand, caught them nicely as they climbed through the window, this time from the outside.

Another incident was on April Fools Day, when a lad pinned a pig's tail on the teacher- probably not in the schoolroom, but outside. As a result the tail was pinned on that lad in the classroom and he was made to stand on the desk so everyone could see it.

Gladys Hoffman/Mary H

I never did anything naughty,
I was too frightened
I was a good girl
Unknown/ Mary H

School concerts were important social events, particularly during the early 1920's. Participation with costume making and other arrangements brought many mothers out of isolation. For many years the Annual School Picnics were eagerly looked forward to by the children, with races, games etc and of

course, the pooled luncheon being enjoyed by young and old.

On several occasions, children assembled at the school, then led by the School Band, marched to the Recreation Park, near the Doecke Homestead where the picnics were held.

Another highlight for students and residents of the area was a special train, which on several occasions ran from Morgan to a Beach resort taking lots of excited youngsters to the seaside for a day. 'Sutherlands School, Looking Back to the days of Talk and Chalk'

Recreation at school was limited to playing 'rounders' with an occasional game of cricket, later, basketball was introduced and occasionally, Charlie Brooks, the teacher at Australia Plains School, would bring along the scholars of that school for a competitive game of basketball.

'Memories of the Peep Hill Public School 1883-1939'

There I was at the control of our proudly built soapbox on the top of Slaughterhouse Hill. The Schultz boys and I had spent countless hours collecting materials and constructing what our young minds imagined would be an indestructible thrill machine.

The track for our newly formed soapbox adventures was carefully planned by clearing a rock-free path from the start at the top of the hill.

Much debate and need I say, guessing, was spent on the actual stopping procedure should our soapbox make it to the bottom of the hill - hopefully with the driver still at controls.

As an older person looking back Slaughterhouse Hill was nearly appropriate although our innocent young minds knew that the location of the butcher's slaughterhouse at the bottom of the hill made the naming obvious. The speed of descent for both vehicle and driver however was cause for some concern for the Schultz boys and myself, so in our youthful wisdom a large sweeping S bend was carefully constructed at the midway point of the track. This we

considered would slow the runaway vehicle just enough to negotiate the home straight somewhere between the blood pit, the slaughterhouse and the dam.

To three primary school boys the soapbox seemed a marvel of modern technology, but in reality it was very basic. Four pieces of wood, four old pram wheels, two seats, a piece of rope for steering, all put together with a couple of bolts and plenty of nails. To keep the story short, I found the wheels so I got the first ride and how well I remember it.

When you are young you don't develop fear until you actually hurt.

The start was easy but all so suddenly momentum took over. The thinking process hardly had time to develop as the S bend loomed up. To my young brain, straight ahead beckoned, but then what? Blood pit, slaughterhouse or dam at Mac3? My survival instincts said slow down now or never, so S bend it was, sharp left, and that is why my memory is so vivid. Have you ever slid on your backside for several metres on a soapbox track from which all the stones have not been removed?

Through my watery eyes I saw the Schultz boys inspecting the soapbox. The buckled rear wheel suggested the cornering was not our vehicle's strong point and my stinging backside voted for a seat on it next time.

Greg Post/ Mary H

100 years with the Eudunda Club 1888-1988....continued

In January, 1897, President Thiele presided over a meeting which decided to appoint a manager. In a secret ballot, Mr. Lutz won the position from his nearest rival by 17 votes to 5. It was agreed that all his expenses, such as a day in Adelaide on behalf of the Club, would be paid at the rate of £1 per day. At the close of this year renovations seem to have been almost continuous. Farmers requested more room in the horse stable. Toilets were repaired at a cost of fifteen shillings. A special meeting on 20th November, 1897, attended to many items of repair and improvement. Mr. Rossler wall-papered the parlor and painted the ceiling as well as the passage walls and ceiling for £5-15-8. At this time wallpaper cost 1/4 a roll. Coconut matting was bought for the passage. As the chairs needed varnish it was agreed that the painter varnish one, as a sample, to give the members a chance to express their opinion.

The outcome was that Mr. Rossler was engaged to varnish one dozen chairs at 6d (sixpence) each. Tenders were called for painting the outside of the Club, ten windows and five doors. It appears the work was given to Messrs Both and Traeger and was to be completed by January 20th. A load of Gawler sand was bought to keep the beer in the cellar cool. Gawler sand was considered best for this purpose, being coarser and cleaner than river or creek sand.

Preparations had to be completed on time as the Entertainment Committee had arranged a Ball for 4th February (only people living within ten miles of Eudunda were eligible to attend). Admission was 1/6 at the door. It was agreed that copies of the Illustrated Paper be bound each year at a cost of 7/- . In June, 1898, a decision was made to lock the bar-room from 10 a.m. until noon on Sundays. No noise was to be tolerated. It was strictly forbidden to have any music, play cards, bagatelle or dominoes. A notice to this effect was hung in the bar room. A letter was sent to a member asking that he apologise by letter for remarks made about the Club. In any case his name would be removed from the membership list. The apology was received on 23rd July, 1898, by letter. Another member received a letter accusing him of bringing a public house agent (Spion) into the Club. He was threatened with the costs and expelled.

Early in this year the Annual General Meeting decided to give their treasurer and auditor £7 each. In April, it was agreed to keep a record book of all those who had left the membership of the Club. More books were required for the library, so in November it was suggested that £10 worth of good books be bought from Dr. Feige. Two members were nominated to select the books. Finally eight were purchased for £13-10-0. A piano stool, from Mr. Haevecker, cost 18/-. It was now decided that no-one learning music was to be allowed to practice on the club piano. Concert admission charges at this time were as follows:- Members: sixpence, their children under fourteen years of age 3d. (threepence). Non-members 1/6, their children ninepence. Seats were booked for concerts only. Non-members had to book eight days before a concert.

Mr. Eichele was engaged to put a new zinc cover over the counter as soon as possible. In October, 1899, a ladder was purchased for use in unloading kegs. No-one under twenty years of age was accepted as a member. In November, the verandah was enclosed with

galvanised iron and the verandah posts painted. This work was undertaken by Mr. Eichele. It is interesting to see how carefully step by step, as money became available, improvements were gradually made. In December, 1899, the kitchen was painted and a small bedroom papered. By 1st January, 1900, the Club appears to have a long list of office holders. At a meeting on New Year's Day the following members were voted into office. President - Mr. Thiele; Vice-President - J.A. Pfitzner; Treasurer - Mr. Dallurz; Secretary - Mr. Reimann; House Secretary - Mr. Thiem; House Controller - Mr. Aesche; Librarian - Mr. Rossler; Auditor - C.C. Milde; Manager - Mr. Thiem, who held the licence for the club.

Entertainment Committee for the same period comprised Messrs. Kiesewetter, R. Gehling and Hemmerdinger. This day would seem a strange time to hold a meeting, but to farmers and business men of 1900 it was an acceptable time, free of pressure from work. A new oven was required for the kitchen. Water was scarce as it was a drought year and Eudunda had, as yet, no water scheme. The Club, fortunately, had plenty of water so each member was allowed a bucketful a day until there were only three feet of water left, and this had to be reserved for the Club's own use. It was suggested that as a gesture of friendship the Tanunda and Eudunda Clubs amalgamate. This was mainly for the benefit of any members, who moved from one town to the other. They would then have a fully paid membership card and could freely join in with each other's activities.

At a meeting held on 27th January, 1900, President Thiele urged his committee to arrange a concert in aid of the wounded soldiers in the Transvaal. The Boer War was raging in South Africa and as naturalized subjects of the British Empire he appears to have considered this a matter of urgency, for the Club would openly be showing their loyalty to the Crown. A special committee comprising of Messrs. P. Hilbig, Rossler, Leditschke, Hemmerdinger, G.A. Hilbig, Reimann and Wiesner, was elected to take the matter in hand. This committee met soon after to finalise arrangements and it was decided to donate the total amount raised to the Patriotic Fund. Tickets for adults cost 1/-, reserved seats 2/-, children under 14 years of age, half price. There seems to have been plenty of talent available because frequently

concerts were arranged at very short notice. A sum of £11-2-0 was raised, which represented a very good attendance.

As early as 1897 it was agreed to send round a subscription list for the building of a new hall. During 1900, many extra meetings were held as the Club tried to launch this exciting project. On 23rd May, 1900, it was agreed that tenders be called for the building: twice in the German paper and four times in the Advertiser and Register, and twice in the Kapunda Herald. A tender from Messrs Both and Eichele for £315 was accepted. The hall was to be sixty feet long, by thirty feet wide. There was to be a stage, its sides covered with bright red turkey twill. This was a strong hard wearing material very popular at this time. It was suggested that five lamps or dark lanterns be placed above the stage and fortnightly Quadrille parties, conducted by Club members, be held. Early well known Eudunda names were prominent on the Building Committee, namely, Wiesner, Dallurtz, A. Lutz, Reimann and Hilbig. From among themselves they voted for an overseer of works and Mr. A. Lutz was elected to fill this position. It was decided to call the building "Century Hall" and elaborate plans were made for the opening on 12th April, 1901. This was indeed a great occasion for the whole district and a concert and dance were arranged for the evening at which the Nuriootpa Band and Tanunda Orchestra were both invited to play. During the day the German Flag was hoisted over the Club House and the Union Jack over the new hall.

From 1906 onward for several years the membership remained static at about 70. In 1912 there was a dramatic increase in numbers brought about by the installation of the first billiard table (about 200 members). Wages in 1912 were certainly far below our standards today. At this time two rooms were added at the back of the hall and the contract for the building went to Cowell Bros., well known Adelaide timber merchants. Tradesmen received 1/6 per hour and an apprentice, one shilling. Meetings of Club members were held fortnightly and at times bar takings amounted to £25 a fortnight. When the additions were completed it was agreed to have cooling apparatus for drinks installed under them, with storage for kegs and boxes. This was to have a sliding door. The new rooms were insured for £100.

In March, 1913, Mr. Goedecke applied for permission to use the piano. This was granted at a cost of 10/- per quarter and five shillings extra was charged if used

by gas- light. An ice chest was also acquired about this time. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Unterhaltungs Club, the Eudunda Entertainment Club Inc. decided to mark this occasion with a Men's Evening, on 28th May, 1913. Again a notice disapproving of bad behaviour had to be sent to a member. In August, 1914, gloom was cast over the whole of Australia with the outbreak of war in Europe and this soon engulfed the whole British Empire. The Club did not possess a Union Jack (the old one having worn out), and as a Patriotic Demonstration Day was to be held on 3rd September, it seemed very necessary to obtain a new one. Therefore it was decided to immediately erect a thirty foot high flag pole and buy a four yard flag, which would be flown for the first time on that day.

NOTABLE DATES

1880 - May 15th Completion of the Local Court and Police Station - cost £1,500.

1886 Eudunda's population was 197 citizens.

1909 - March 13th The Eudunda Football Club changed its colours to orange & black.

1909 - April 15th Elder Smith & Co. had filled in the creek opposite Appelt's store

and commenced to build Sale Yards.
1909 - April 22nd Water becoming scarce. Dams drying up.

1909 - July 1st Grandstand at Oval completed.

1926 - June 7th Electric Lights were switched on in Eudunda by Mr. F.G.E. Appelt.

1931 - March 1st The Eudunda Fire Station in Bruce Street opened.

1948 - July 1st Eudunda's first Ambulance was put into commission when it's first

patient, Mr. G. Traeger from Morgan, was transported to the Eudunda Hospital at a hire charge of £2.

2002 - Oct 13th Gosling Cottage was officially opened. (part of the Heritage Gallery)

2006 - Sept 4th Eudunda's favorite son Colin Thiele passed away. 1920-2006

POSTCARDS -2000 from the internet

EUDUNDA - COLIN THIELE COUNTRY

The Sun on the Stubble, The Shadow on the Hills - the author's book titles come

alive in Colin Thiele country. In this episode, I carved a trail through historic Eudunda to pay an 80th birthday tribute to one of Australia's best-loved storytellers. The famous author's birthplace is touching 130 years old. Eudunda is high in the ranges beyond the Barossa Valley; about 1½ hours drive from Adelaide.

For thousands of years the Nadjuri aboriginal people called the gully above the town "Jadunda-kawi", meaning water out of the ground. The spring-fed and small creek and the early European stockmen would bring cattle down from northern Kidman properties or across the Murray Flats from NSW and water their mobs there.

About where the single-storey colonial Eudunda Hotel stands today, an enterprising fellow called Henry Watson set up a grog shop to water the horsemen. That was in 1870, and within a couple of years, Irishman John Hannon subdivided a section of land and built the pub. Within a decade, Eudunda had all the trappings of a farming town.

Round it, the land attracted the same breed of hardworking Silesian settlers who founded Hahndorf, Lobethal and the Barossa Valley; you can definitely add Eudunda to that list. Among them was Colin Thiele's grandfather. On a rambling dirt road high on a long ridge we found the family farm where Colin spent his boyhood. The cottage is set in wheat paddocks well back from the road, still surrounded by old stone outhouses and barns.

In his first novel, the new octogenarian wrote about "the morning light, golden on the stubble", and continued "far up the slopes towards the range, the patches of fallow stretched rich and brown and the magpies were circling and carolling above the gums". As Postcards pilgrims, we marvelled at the beauty of his country before our eyes. It was exactly as he described it.

A few kilometres south, Eudunda's early growth spurts have left their legacy in a

well preserved town. Good wheat years in the 1880's, however, were followed by drought and depression and the stoic cockies responded by forming a famous regional institution, the Eudunda Farmers Co-Op. It peaked at more than fifty shops around the State, and the town supermarket is still a part of it. There are several shop signs of its Germanic heritage in the main street, and into this farming community the revered educators and writes Colin Thiele was born in November 1920.

Only German was spoken on his farm, and he learned his English language in a tiny school at Julia. His beloved teacher's wet-day storytelling sowed more seeds.

Speaking of stories, he came to a pretty cottage in Eudunda to live with two eccentric bachelor uncles, Fred and August, for his upper primary years. Round the fire at night they told ghost stories - so convincingly, as Colin puts it in "Dew on My Boots", that he usually went to bed in a state of shock. On our literary trail, we'd found the germination of his book "Uncle Gustav's Ghosts".

The old family names and family trees carpet the walls on the Eudunda Family Heritage Gallery, and amongst the Schillers and Schmidts and other Silesian names, the Thiele's are there, of course. The town historian burst into some rollicking "Eudunda deutsch" as he encouraged us all to join the coming 80th birthday celebrations.

On a bend between the old and deserted first shopping street and the town centre, the nineteenth century Eudunda Mill is a landmark. It was the birthplace of the Laucke flour-milling tradition and the source of Mrs. Thiele's farm supplies. The money from her cream sales, however, went to her son's education. In the old railway yards across the road, the tall white silos will soon be high again with wheat. Across from the now sadly dilapidated Eudunda railway station, Colin would watch the wheat-stacks "rise up into the sky" each Christmas, "with the centre...still a jumble of hollows, nooks

and ridges - marvellous for races and Sunday games". They were a favourite nestling spot for lovers, too.

A few kilometres along the track, Colin Thiele caught the train everyday at Hampden siding to go to high school. I stood on the pine-tree infested platform recounting the saga....a half-hour ride on his bicycle in the dark along a rutted road to catch the 7am train, not to return till 8.30pm to ride home. He'd stay at Kapunda High School till 7 o'clock each evening; the headmaster gave him his own set of keys so he could lock up. But in all those school and train-carriage hours, he read the classics and watched the undulating countryside go by, and buckets of literary seeds were sown.

His love of the land and the language come together when Colin Thiele writes about the Coorong in Stormboy. "They call it the Ninety Mile Beach. From thousands of miles around the cold, wet underbelly of the world the waves come sweeping in towards the shore and pitch down in a terrible rain of white water and spray". His writing had both daunted and inspired me as we wrote the Postcards documentary special, The Coorong. Again, his words were magnificently apt when we approached the cliffs on the Great Australian Bight during our West Coast special.

"It is not only their sheer height and inaccessibility that awes the mind and stirs the heart. It is their setting. For here their spirit is at one with the land".

Beyond the Barossa, Eudunda boasted two Lutheran churches for the best part of a century. There were two theologically divided congregations until they united in 1966. Eudunda was almost two towns too. The old uphill half was split by the railway from the flat which won out as the shopping centre.

They're unified behind their mascot, Uncle Gustav, who stands in metallic profile beside all three incoming roads. He is one of Colin Thiele's many characters who walked the streets before they appeared in

his dozens of novels that borrow from his memories. The sun fell on the stubble and the escapades with chooks and cows and pigs happened over these hills and this town. Make no mistake, the town in The Valley Between, Gomunda, is his hometown, Eudunda.

Colin Thiele turns 80 on Thursday 16 November and on the following weekend they'll gather round the sculpture in Memorial Park in celebration. Their famous son sits in bronze with notebook in hand and Mr Percival the pelican from Stormboy at his side. Sadly, the town picnic and other festivities will take place without his presence, as he is exiled by arthritis and ill-health in Queensland. But he'll be back in spirit. Eudunda is part of this lovely man and inspiring writer. As he writes of his boyhood here, "you soak it up through your boot-soles". Happy Birthday, Colin Thiele!

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Details:
Colin Thiele 80th Birthday Celebrations

NOVEMBER 2000

Grandpa's Spectacles

Grandpa's spectacles cannot be found; He has searched all the rooms, high and low, round and round; Now he calls to the young ones, and what does he say?

"Twopence for the child who will find them today."

Then Henry and Nellie, and Edward all ran,

And a most thorough hunt for the glasses began;

And dear little Nell, in her generous way, Said, "I'll look for them Grandpa, with out any pay!"

All through the big Bible she searches with care,

That lies on the table by Grandpa's chair; They feel in his pockets, they peep in his hat,

They pull out the sofa; they shake out the mat;

Then down on all fours, like two good-natured bears,

Go Harry and Ned, under the tables and chairs;

Till quite out of breath Ned is heard to declare

He believes that those glasses are not anywhere;

But Nellie, who, leaning on Grandpa's knee,

Was thinking most earnestly where they could be,

Looked suddenly up in the kind, faded eyes,

And her innocent brown ones grew big with surprise;

She clapped both her hands; all her dimples came out;

She turned to the boys with a bright roguish shout;

"You may leave off your looking, both Harry and Ned,

For there are the glasses on Grandpa's head!"