

FRIENDS OF WESTGARTHTOWN

Newsletter

Vol. 26, No. 2, November 2022

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF WESTGARTHTOWN, THE WURUNDJERI WILLUM PEOPLE, AND PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THEIR ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

EDITOR'S NOTE

In this edition of *Friends of Westgarthtown Newsletter* Léon Borrack provides an update on the management transition of Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and Heritage Garden from the Friends of Westgarthtown to the City of Whittlesea. While the transition has taken longer than expected considerable progress has been made over the last six months. Thank you Léon for all your dedicated work on this project.

The heritage garden at Ziebell's Farmhouse looks wonderful at present. The garden is a great tribute to the hard work Gillian Borrack, Doretta Belôt, Paul Schultz and John Fry perform during their regular garden working bees, along with our horticulturalist Christine Burke. John Fry has conducted a pleasing number of tours since the easing of COVID restrictions so his attendees, along with those who visit during Museum Director Gordon Johnston's opening hours, have been able to see the garden at its best.

Descendants' Day, which was cancelled from 2020/22, is set to return in March 2023 – see Megan Moritz's report on page 3. In the interim, the Descendants' Day Committee has arranged several successful working bees in the cemetery, which were well attended by descendants. Thanks to Doretta Belôt and Paul Schultz for arranging these working bees.

In this edition we feature Melinda Tam's article about the Siebel family, along with the Barglings, who lived in Settlement Road on the Thomastown Small Holdings Estate. We also remember Margaret Constantine, a Kreitling descendant and foundation member of the Friends of Westgarthtown, who died recently. Margaret's father, Joe Lynch, whose mother was Sophia Kreitling from Westgarthtown, was raised at Thomastown by Charlie and Augusta (née Kreitling) Bargling.

I have also included an article about Northern Fibrous Plaster, which was located at our old farm from 1949–57. Glen Brothers and Campbell, which owned the company, then relocated to Settlement Road at Thomastown. Along with Fowler's Pottery, which began production in 1928, it was one of Thomastown's first secondary industries.

We held our 2021/22 Annual General Meeting at Ziebell's Farmhouse on 12 November 2022. Office bearers for 2022/23 are included on the last page of this newsletter. As membership payments for 2022/23 are now due (\$10 single and \$20 family), see the attached flyer for further details.

Rob Wuchatsch

Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum

Management Transition

LÉON BORRACK Ziebell's Farmhouse Operations Representative

For almost 30 years, Ziebell's Farmhouse has been managed by the Friends of Westgarthtown on behalf of the City of Whittlesea. These efforts established Westgarthtown, and Ziebell's Farmhouse in particular, as a unique cultural heritage destination. In 2018, we gained accreditation from Australia's peak professional museum association, the Australian Museum and Galleries Association (AMaGA) for Ziebell's Farmhouse as a museum – the only museum within the municipality.

In late 2020, Friends of Westgarthtown and Council staff commenced a process to transfer the operations of Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and Heritage Garden to the City of Whittlesea. The purpose of undertaking this change was to secure a sustainable future for Ziebell's Farmhouse. Although the process has been extended beyond the timeframe originally imagined, it is now approaching its conclusion.

I'm pleased to announce we have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Council for transferring operations. Following from that, our Museum Director Gordon Johnston officially became an employee of the City of Whittlesea on 14 November 2022. This marks the beginning of the final stage of transition spanning through to 30 June 2023. Gordon will continue to direct the museum and heritage garden; and during the next 7½ months will lead the controlled transition of operations to the City of Whittlesea's governance including administration, museum openings, exhibitions and public programs, marketing, community engagement, cleaning, garden care and maintenance.

This is a new and exciting phase for Ziebell's Farmhouse. Although tinged with sadness at the end of an era, we embrace the wonderful opportunities and potential for growth it brings. Importantly the Friends of Westgarthtown will remain engaged as the primary community stakeholder for the site. A multi-tiered process has been agreed in the MoU ensuring we remain informed and consulted on significant activities and change at Ziebell's Farmhouse.

I would like to thank Gordon for his outstanding leadership of the museum over the past 3½ years. Despite the domination of COVID during his tenure, he has brought an entirely new level of relevance to Ziebell's Farmhouse through his vision and strategic approach to connect the site's heritage and history to the subjects that matter to our modern community. It has been an honour and a pleasure to work with him and I look forward to continuing to do so under the new arrangements.

Finally, I would like to recognize the people who saved Ziebell's Farmhouse and turned it into the destination it is today. That story began with Sylvia Schultz whose vision was to see it preserved and accessible for future generations. Sylvia was passionate about the place where she largely grew up and was the catalyst and source of knowledge for many of the big ideas that have been delivered here. Sylvia's original collaborators in this endeavor were Robert Wuchatsch, my uncle Geoff Borrack and my mum Gillian Borrack. Together these four people, with the assistance and support of John Fry as a Councillor, made Ziebell's Farmhouse what it is today. I am proud to have worked with them all over the past 15 years of my involvement with the committee. It is my hope that the changes we have made to the operational arrangements honour their vision, passion and decades of hard work.

Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and Garden

A (short) Message from the Museum and Garden Director.

Hello Everyone,

I'll send a Ziebell's Farmhouse newsletter in the very near future. However, the main thing to convey to you all now is garden, garden, garden! The Ziebell's Farmhouse Garden is just stunning at present. Despite the recent rain, the roses are blooming, as are the Peonies, Lupins and much much more. It really is a good time to drop in. (Members are admitted free.)

Also, our Turning Back to Edgars Creek exhibition received the Keeping Victoria Beautiful 2021 Sustainable Cities Heritage and Culture Award (Community). Recently it was shortlisted in the Australian Museums and Galleries Association 2022 awards. There was stiff competition, and we didn't win but it was the first time the museum had been shortlisted.

Hope to see you soon.

Gordon Johnston

Descendants' day 2023

BY MEGAN (NÉE BELÔT) MORITZ

The next Westgarthtown Descendants' Day will be held on Sunday 5 March 2023.

It will be fantastic to see everyone again since the day has been on hold due to COVID. It is exciting that Ziebell's Farmhouse at Westgarthtown is now classified as a museum and heritage garden and has open days each Sunday. As a result we will be sharing the place we all love with the general public. To avoid confusion descendants will be asked to wear a name tag, which will be provided, to identify them as a Descendant.

There will also be a lucky door prize for descendants so don't forget to get your lucky ticket! As always you are most welcome to bring a picnic lunch and chair. We will be hosting a BBQ for a small fee too. Tea and coffee will be provided free of charge.

If you are unable to attend the Descendants' Day we now also hold working bees twice a year at the cemetery where we do some gardening and catching up.

Now COVID restrictions have eased there will be events at Ziebell's Farmhouse organized by Gordon Johnston which you are always welcome to attend. Coming events will be included in the newsletter which you will receive if you are a member of the Friends of Westgarthtown.

Have a Merry Christmas and hopefully we will see you at Descendants' Day on 5 March 2023.

Wilhelmine 'Minnie' Siebel and her Family

BY MELINDA TAM

My great great aunt Wilhelmine Louise (known as Minnie) Nebel was born on 18 August 1862 at Westgarthtown. Her parents were Georg and Friederike (née Born) Nebel. Her father was a farmer and shoemaker. Her parents had emigrated from Prussia in 1854. She would have been baptised in Westgarthtown Lutheran Church.

Wilhelmine Nebel probably started her education at Westgarthtown Lutheran School in about 1867. Her father was a committee member for the school from at least 1865 to 1866. She attended Thomastown State School in 1875; she presumably spent a year there to improve her English. After she finished her schooling, she was confirmed in the Lutheran Church in 1876. Wilhelmine Nebel was residing at Thomastown in 1885.

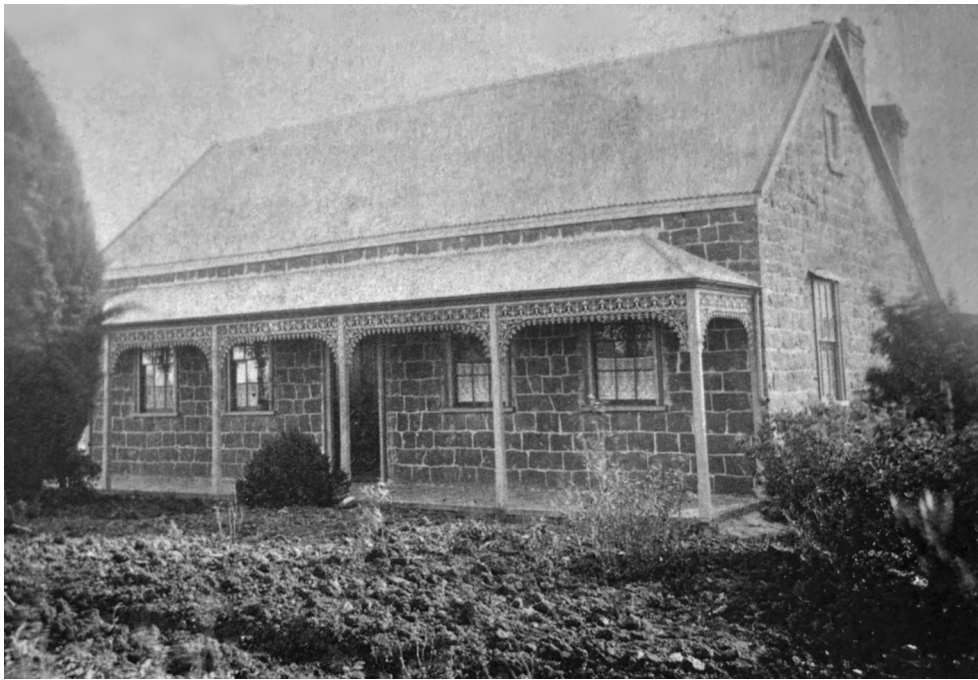


Wilhelmine (Minnie) Siebel (née Nebel), 1880s (Melinda Tam).

On 13 October 1885 Minnie Nebel was married to Friedrich Johann Siebel by Pastor Hermann Herlitz in Trinity Lutheran Church, East Melbourne. Friedrich Johann (known as Johann or John) Siebel was born on 13 October 1861 at Westgarthtown. His parents were Johann Gottlob and Johanna Christiane (née Neumann) Siebel. His parents were from Silesia, Prussia. Johann Siebel would have been baptized in Westgarthtown Lutheran Church and attended Westgarthtown Lutheran School. He was confirmed in Trinity Lutheran Church, East Melbourne by Pastor Herman Herlitz in 1874. In 1885 Johann Siebel was a farmer residing at Thomastown.

On 1 February 1876 Johann Siebel's father Gottlob Siebel had gifted the Siebel farm at Westgarthtown to Georg Nebel and Johann Graff in trust for his son Johann Siebel. This was Lots 5 and 6 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora. This was 29 acres in size. The trustees paid ten shillings. On the same day Gottlob Siebel settled the former Rosel farm at Westgarthtown on his wife Christiane Siebel and Johann Graff with the proviso that the land was to pass to his son Johann Siebel on the death of his wife. This was Lots 7 and 8 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora. This was 9 acres in size. These actions were taken because Gottlob Siebel was suffering from dementia and he wished to safeguard the land for his family. Johann Siebel was fourteen at the time and so legally a minor. Gottlob Siebel was admitted to the Kew Asylum the following year and died there on 2 October 1877.

Gottlob Siebel left an unproven will dated 8 August 1870. Johann Siebel on turning twenty one was to inherit all his father's real estate and personal property. He was to pay £150 to his mother Christiane Siebel and £100 to his sister Ernstine Siebel. One hundred pounds had already been paid to his sister Henriette Schultze. In addition he was to provide his mother Christiane Siebel with a dwelling, firewood, half a pound of fresh butter, half a dozen fresh eggs per week and one quart of new milk



Siebel's house at Westgarthtown, c. 1885 (Paul Schultz).

per day. Christiane Siebel was appointed the guardian of her son Johann Siebel.

After their marriage in 1885, Johann and Minnie Siebel lived on the Siebel farm at Westgarthtown. Johann and Minnie Siebel had two children:

1. Annie Louise Siebel was born on 19 September 1886 in Thomastown.
2. Frederick John Siebel was born on 10 March 1888 in Thomastown.

In 1887 Johann Siebel paid £12 per annum to lease the land in the Lutheran church reserve; this was also known as the school reserve. This was Lot 21 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora excluding the cemetery and adjoining road. It was less than ten acres in size. The land was owned communally by Westgarthtown settlers. From 1889 to 1893 he paid £7 per annum and from 1894 to 1903 paid £6 per annum. Johann Siebel would later rent the land from 1904 to 1912 and 1918 to 1922.

Tragedy struck on 5 June 1890 when Minnie Siebel died at Thomastown. She was ill with a hepatic abscess for a month before her death and this developed into peritonitis shortly before her death. She was 27 years old. She was buried in Westgarthtown Cemetery.

On 10 February 1892 Johann Siebel was married to Emilie Lydia (known as Lydia) Proposch by Pastor Hermann Herlitz in Trinity Lutheran Church, East Melbourne. Lydia Proposch was born on 15 November 1873 in Robertstown, South Australia. Her parents were Christian and Elizabeth (nee Borak) Proposch. Her father was a farmer in 1892. She was residing at Thomastown in 1892.



Annie and Frederick Siebel as children, c. 1895 (Dean Putting).



Fred Siebel standing in crop on farm at Westgarthtown prior to harvest, c. 1920s (Rob Wuchatsch).

Johann and Lydia Siebel had six children, five of whom survived infancy:

1. Arthur Henry Siebel was born on 7 June 1893 in Epping.
2. Julius Adolph Theodore Siebel was born on 1 March 1895 in Epping.
3. Albert Siebel was born on 11 May 1901 in Epping.
4. Tellus Siebel was born on 16 May 1904 in Epping. He died in 1904 in Epping aged 10 weeks and was buried in the Westgarthtown Cemetery.
5. Edward John Siebel was born on 17 November 1905 in Epping.
6. Gladys Mary Elizabeth Siebel was born on 14 November 1908 in Epping.

On 24 September 1898 Johann Siebel's mother Christiane Siebel died. After her death Johann Siebel took possession of the former Rosel farm.

On 14 April 1899 the Siebel farm was conveyed back to Johann Siebel by the surviving trustee Johann Graff. The other trustee, Georg Nebel, had died in 1893. On 5 May 1899 Johann Siebel mortgaged the Siebel farm and the former Rosel farm to State Savings Bank of Victoria for £100. This mortgage was paid out in full on 17 June 1903.

On 1 June 1903 Johann Siebel purchased the Zimmer farm at Westgarthtown from the executors of Michael Zimmer for £1,188 pounds and nine shillings. This was Lots 3 and 4 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora and was 48 acres in size. On 17 June 1903 Johann Siebel mortgaged the Siebel farm and the former Rosel and Zimmer farms to the Savings Bank of Victoria for £900. This mortgage was paid out in full on 10 October 1922. The Siebel property at Thomastown was known as "Westbourne Park" and operated as a dairy farm. From 1918 to 1922 Johann Siebel also rented railway land at Thomastown.

In February 1915 during World War I an anonymous complaint was made against Frederick Siebel who was carting with a horse and dray to the Broadmeadows Army Camp. The complainant claimed that the Siebels were "well-to-do" and did not try to hide their sympathy for Germany. The Epping policeman Constable Woodhouse stated in his report that he had never heard of them being disloyal in any way or making disloyal statements.

Johann Siebel had much success at the Royal and Whittlesea Shows over many years with his mangels, wheaten hay and chaff, and oaten hay and chaff. He was a contributor to the Whittlesea District exhibit at the Royal Show.

On 11 October 1920 Johann Siebel purchased a block of land on Epping Road,



Johann (John) and Lydia Siebel and family, 1930s (Rob Wuchatsch).

Reservoir. This was Lot 495 Plan of Subdivision 7180 and was part of Portion 12 Parish of Keelbundora. The property would be known as "Westbourne".

On 5 August 1926 Johann Siebel sold part of Lot 3 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora to Frank Abbott for £450. This was part of the former Zimmer Farm and was three acres in size. Frank Abbott immediately sold it to Thomastown Station Subdivisions Pty. Ltd.

On 18 December 1926 Johann Siebel sold the remaining part of Lot 3 and Lots 5 and 7 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora to T.M. Burke Estates Pty. Ltd. This was 59 acres one rood and 14 perches in size. The total purchase price was £10,680/15/-. He was to be paid immediately a £700 deposit with a further deposit of £2,000 on 1 January 1927. The rest of the purchase money was to be paid in six yearly instalments with interest on unpaid purchase monies at £6 per centum per annum.

On 12 September 1927 Johann Siebel purchased another block of land on Epping Road, Reservoir. This was Lot 494 Plan of Subdivision 7180 and was part of Portion 12 Parish of Keelbundora. This block adjoined his previous purchase in 1920.

By 1936 T.M. Burke Estates Pty. Ltd. appears to have defaulted on the payment of the outstanding purchase money for the remaining part of Lot 3 and Lots 5 and 7 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora. They had subdivided and sold some of the land. Ownership of unsold land was retained by Johann Siebel.

By 1937 Johann Siebel had retired from farming and moved to his property in Epping Road, Reservoir. His son Frederick Siebel contracted to buy the land belonging to the Siebel farm and the former Rosel and Zimmer farms at Thomastown which had not been previously sold to developers.

In 17 October 1941 Johann Siebel purchased a rental property at 3 Milton Street, Ascot Vale, then on 26 February 1942 he purchased another rental property at 18 Maxwell Grove, Caulfield.

Johann Siebel was organist at the Westgarthtown Lutheran Church for more than fifty years from at least 1885 and ending in 1935. From 1889 to 1902 he was paid £2 per annum for playing the harmonium and he was a church elder in the Westgarthtown Lutheran Church from at least 1892. Johann Siebel, Albert Wuchatsch, Benjamin Seeber and Ernst Maltzahn were appointed trustees on 27

February 1931 by Ernst Maltzahn and Louis Maltzahn the executors of Ludwig Maltzahn, the last surviving trustee who died in 1930. Johann Siebel and his family left the Westgarthtown Lutheran Church in 1935 after the church joined the German Evangelical Church Federation. He however remained a church trustee until his death in 1944.

Johann Siebel donated one shilling to the Franco Prussian War Benefit, £1 to the reduction of the debt on the building of Trinity Lutheran Church, East Melbourne, £1/2/6 to Lutheran Church causes and 10/- to an Australian Wounded Soldiers Fund during World War I.

Johann Siebel died on 18 May 1944 aged 82 years at Reservoir and was buried in Preston Cemetery. The beneficiaries of his will were his widow who received his organ and all the household furniture and effects, his executors (his three sons Frederick, Arthur and Albert Siebel) were to receive £50 each and his son Frederick Siebel a further £100. Johann Siebel left his residence to his wife for life and then to his daughter Gladys for life or until she married. He left the income from the investment of £3,000 to his wife for life or until she remarried. The residue of his estate was to be divided equally between his six surviving children. Lydia Siebel died in 1955 aged 82 years at Greensborough and was buried with her husband in Preston Cemetery.

Johann and Wilhelmina Siebel's two children both married:

- 1) Annie Siebel (1886–1934) married Herbert Singleton. She had one child.
- 2) Frederick Siebel (1888–1969) married Stella Wallington and they had no issue. After her death he married Alwina Oldenburg (a Ziebell/Karsten/Oldenburg descendant) and they also had no issue.

Frederick Siebel was successful in showing his greyhounds in the early 1900s. His greyhound Frank won first prize and champion at the Royal Melbourne Show in 1906. He was also the Shire of Epping Dog Registrar in 1913.

On 12 June 1946 Frederick Siebel purchased Lots 4, 6 and 8 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora from the estate of his father Johann Siebel. This was 24 acres in size. He paid £1,684 to his father's estate and £650 to George Gardiner who held an interest in the property; George Gardiner had previously paid £816 to Johann Siebel. On 27 June 1946 Frederick Siebel purchased the unsold land on the remaining part of Lot 3 and Lots 5 and 7 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora from his estate of his father Johann Siebel. This was 26 acres three roods and two perches in size.

From 1939 to 1950 Friedrich Siebel was a farmer residing at Thomastown. He was operating a dairy farm. The remaining part of Lot 3 and Lots 5 and 7 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora were subdivided into 101 residential blocks of land and Frederick Siebel sold them between 1949 and 1964. On 6 May 1950 Friedrich Siebel sold Lots 4, 6 and 8 Section 25 Parish of Keelbundora to James Stow for £6,000. This included the Siebel farmhouse; this was the end of ninety years of occupation by the Siebel family.

On 20 July 1950 Frederick and his brother Albert Siebel purchased a house and farm in Bridge Inn Road, Wollert from the estate of their cousin Carl Schultz. This was part of Crown Portion 6, Parish of Kalkallo and was 183 acres 2 roods and 36 perches in size. They held this land for five years before selling to John McKimmie of Thomastown in 1955.

The Siebel farmhouse, which was built in 1860, is still extant and is located at 77 Mount View Road, Thomastown. It is classified by the National Trust and included on Victoria's Heritage Register.

Vale Margaret Viola Constantine

BY ROB WUCHATSCH

The Friends of Westgarthtown lost one of its foundation members on 11 September 2022 with the death of Margaret Constantine.

Margaret was born on 26 September 1931, the daughter of Joe and Dorothy (Doll) Lynch. Her father Joe, born at Epping in 1905, had been raised at Thomastown by Charlie and Augusta Bargling following his father Tim Lynch's death in 1912. Joe's mother Sophia (née Kreitling) Lynch was Augusta Bargling's sister and both were born and raised on the Kreitling family farm at Westgarthtown. Sophia and Augusta's mother Alwine (née Karsten) Kreitling was the daughter of Heinrich and Maria (née Ziebell) Karsten.

The Bargling's had a 29-acre farm on the Thomastown Small Holdings Estate in Settlement Road. Charlie and Augusta had two daughters – Amelia Viola and Hilda May - but both died young. During the 1920s, Joe played football, cricket and tennis for Thomastown and Epping and worked at the Preston City Council's Epping quarry. On 8 March 1930 Joe married Doll Parsons at Colac and they were caretakers at the Northcote City Council quarry where he worked as a powder monkey when Margaret was born in 1931. A sister Beryl followed in 1934.

In 1943, during the Second World War, Joe joined the RAAF. He gave his address as Quarry Street, Fairfield and occupation as quarry foreman and powder monkey. He qualified as a plant operator in June 1944 and soon after left for New Guinea. Joe drove bulldozers and graders in New Guinea, Morotai and the Philippines, constructing and maintaining airfields, roads and other earthworks to facilitate the Allied advance against the Japanese. Margaret told me that when Joe returned home after the war one of the first things he did was buy a new tennis racquet.

Margaret attended Wales Street Primary School at Thornbury, Westgarth Primary School and University High School before working first at Myers; then as a stenographer for a chartered accountant; and finally as a nurse. She trained at Ballarat Base Hospital and nursed at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital for three months before leaving to marry Con Constantine in 1953.

Con and Margaret built a house in Rathmines Street, Thornbury where they raised three sons – Gary, Graham and Peter. For a time Margaret returned to nursing at the Fairfield Hospital. In 1975 they moved to Beacon Court, Lower Templestowe where Con, a former survey draftsman at the Titles Office, operated a title search business he had established in 1972. One of Margaret's passions was porcelain painting and doll restoration and she worked on many old dolls from around the world. They also enjoyed travelling.

Con died in 2014 and Margaret later sold the house at Lower Templestowe and moved to the Aveo Domainé Retirement Village at Doncaster. She died at Caritas Christi Hospice, Kew aged 90 and was buried in the Lutheran Cemetery at Westgarthtown on 27 September 2022, following a service at Doncaster. Joe and Doll's ashes are interred in the same grave.



Margaret as a nurse, early 1950s (G. Constantine).



Preston City Council quarry at Epping, late 1920s. Joe Lynch at far left in dark jacket behind man with spade (G. Constantine).



Above Margaret and her father Joe Lynch (G. Constantine).

Coffee pot painted by Margaret for Travis and Louise Bull, 2008 (Rob Wuchatsch).

Frans Oscar and Augusta Bargling

BY ROB WUCHATSCH



Frans Oscar (Charlie) Bargling was born at Kalmar, Sweden in February 1867, the son of Frans Wilhelm Bargling, a fisherman and Emilia (née Johanson) Bargling. According to his naturalization application, Charlie arrived in Australia from London aboard the *Port Adelaide* on 5 August 1888.

Charlie Bargling,
c. 1890
(Rob Wuchatsch).

On 25 November 1891, Charlie married Augusta Ernestina Kreitling at Trinity German Lutheran Church, East Melbourne. His address was then Yarraville and Augusta's was Carlton. Her parents, Johann Andreas Kreitling and Alwina (née Karsten) Kreitling, had a dairy farm at Westgarthtown, but also operated a dairy at Carlton, where they sold Westgarthtown's milk. Augusta was born at Westgarthtown on 9 June 1868. Charlie was a milk carter for the Kreitlings which is possibly how he and Augusta met. Earlier in 1891 Augusta and her mother Alwina (née Karsten) had been signatories to the famous Victorian Women's Suffrage Petition.

Following their marriage, Charlie and Augusta lived at Karsten's Cottage at Westgarthtown, where their first daughter Amelia Viola was born in October 1894. By 1896, they had moved to Western Australia, where their second daughter Hilda May was born at Midland Junction in January 1897. In 1899, they were living at Duke Street in Plympton, a suburb now known as East Fremantle.

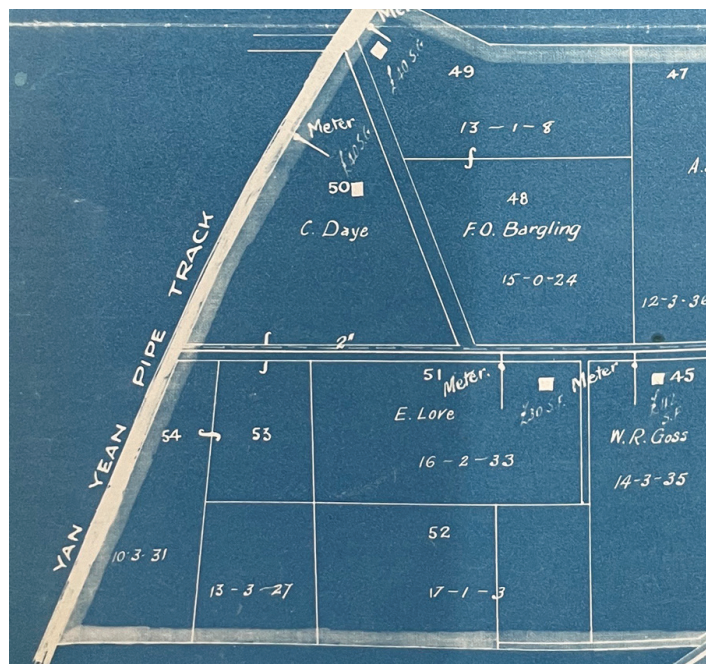
After five years, the Barglings returned to Victoria and lived near the Merri Creek in Section 24 of the Parish of Keelbundora, land leased by the Kreitling family since the 1880s. In October 1907, wishing to purchase land, Charlie applied for Australian citizenship. In his naturalization application he stated he was married with one child, so eldest daughter Amelia must have been dead, although no record has been found in either Victoria or Western Australia.

In December 1907, Charlie was successful in his application to the Lands Purchase and Management Board for a block of land in the newly released Thomastown Small Holdings Estate. He was allocated Lot 49 of 13 acres, located just east of today's Settlement and Dalton Roads roundabout. He soon moved his family there and built a four-roomed house with money advanced by the Board. In July 1910, when he applied for a Conditional Purchase Lease, he wrote 'I have been cultivating about 10 acres of this land and doing outside work. All rents due on Small Holdings permit have been paid.' His lease was approved and in 1911 he successfully applied for another Conditional Purchase Lease on the adjoining Lot 48. This increased his small farm to 28 acres. He produced a small quantity of hay for sale and had 300 fowls but still took outside work as a ploughman.

It was around 1912 that Augusta's young nephew, Joe Lynch, moved in with the Barglings following his father's death. In November 1912 Green and Bargling's tender of £226 was accepted by the Shire of Epping for 'Construction of roadway from Main road to Thomastown settlement.' This was Settlement Road. Early in 1913, Charlie was sued by the Shire of Epping over unpaid rates of £3/19/7, indicating it was difficult to make ends meet on a small farm at Thomastown even when outside work was undertaken. He was often behind in his monthly lease payments to the Lands Purchase and Management Board.

During the First World War, despite having been born in Sweden, Charlie was accused of being a disloyal German in an anonymous letter received by Military Intelligence authorities in January 1916. An investigation revealed that Charlie was employed at the Broadmeadows Army Camp with a waggon and two horses on transport work and received 17/6d a day and rations for himself and his horses. No action, however, appears to have been taken.

Location of Bargling's farm, Settlement Road, Thomastown (PROV).



Charlie and Augusta's surviving child Hilda died in January 1917 aged 20 and was buried at Westgarthtown, presumably in the Kreitling family plot. In 1919, when the Kreitling farm at Westgarthtown was sold, Augusta received £20 as her share.

Charlie continued to supplement his meagre farm income with carting work. In February 1926 he was fined £2 with £1/10/- costs for driving his horse and vehicle at night without a light and £5 with £5 costs for driving while drunk. Three years later, in February 1929, he was lucky to escape serious injury when a car crashed into the back of his horse drawn lorry load of lucerne at night at Werribee. For several years he carted lucerne from Werribee and sold it to help pay the bills.

By late 1935, Charlie was in dire straits financially, physically and emotionally. On 5 December Inspector McCalman reported:

I visited the lessee with regard to payment of his instalment and activities on the block. I found him partly crippled with rheumatism and he is not carrying on any farming operations. His wife is in the Mont Park asylum and her death is expected hourly.

Bargling stated that he is negotiating with a Mr Barry of Preston to take over the property, either to take it over as a lessee, or purchase it outright. He...stated that he cannot pay the instalment of £15/5/8 due as he expects to have to pay about £20 funeral expenses shortly, but that his debt will be paid if he comes to a satisfactory arrangement with Barry.

Augusta died four days later, on 9 December 1935, after a lengthy illness and was buried at Westgarthtown. She was 67. In February 1936 Charlie advised he 'Has no income. Unable to work. 71 years old. Intends to sell. Worth about £750. Wants two months to arrange a sale.'

On 25 March 1936 Charlie sold his Conditional Purchase Lease on Lots 48 and 49 to Amos Baker of Sunbury for £657/10/-. After paying the balance of his purchase money and interest of £292/13/2 to the Closer Settlement Commission, Charlie was left with just over £360. He is then believed to have lived on the Grutzner and Callaghan farms for a time. Charlie died at the Melbourne Benevolent Home at Cheltenham on 9 October 1947 aged 80 and is buried at the Springvale Cemetery.

For further information regarding the Kreitling family see Friends of Westgarthtown News Vol. 18, No. 2, October 2014.

Northern Fibrous Plaster

BY ROB WUCHATSCH

In 1949, during the building boom which followed the Second World War, my father Norman Wuchatsch leased out most of our old farm buildings at Westgarthtown for use as a fibrous plaster factory.

The plaster manufacturing business, owned by brothers Joe and Jack Glen and Jack Campbell, traded as Northern Fibrous Plaster. The factory operated at our farm from 1949–57, when the company moved to a new, specially built factory in Settlement Road, Thomastown. As well as being the landlord, my father also worked for Northern Fibrous Plaster as a fixer, installing plaster sheets in houses from 1950 until his retirement in 1966.

My first memory of the factory dates from around 1954. Each day, our yard was full of FX and FJ Holdens, Fords, Vanguards, Prefects and pushbikes. Everywhere

men in white overalls worked, walked and whistled their way around the factory and yard. But the best part, to me at least, was the fact that we got a phone, to answer after hours enquiries.

Our farm was about one kilometre from the nearest houses, so without the plaster factory, we would never have had the phone connected. The telephone number is indelibly written in my mind – JM 6123. The telephone itself was almost embedded in my mind, as once when I was very young, lightning apparently struck the little black box on the wall near the telephone, showering me in my pram with bakelite fragments.

In these days of purpose built factories, the idea of a plaster factory located in old farm buildings seems ridiculous. The former corrugated iron implement shed, which had also seen life as a chook house, was enlarged and with the installation of several long, concrete topped tables, served as a plaster sheet manufacturing shed. Drying racks were built nearby. Cornices were made in a shed adjoining the bluestone stables, with the stables themselves being used for storage of raw materials, such as hemp and gypsum. The old milking shed served as lunchroom and nailstore, lined with the company's own product. Possums slept behind the plaster walls.

The factory office was a 12 x 8 feet two-roomed hut, made out of old Vanguard packing cases. The walls of our garage were also lined with wooden packing cases from the same batch. The company had a sales office in High Street, Thomastown about 100 metres south of the old red brick primary school building. Mrs Parkes ran the sales office, performing the secretarial duties, while Jack Glen did the estimating.

The factory was usually a hive of activity but there were also lean times and I recall my father being laid off for a few weeks during the 1960 Credit Squeeze.

My favourite place was the shed where the hemp was teased, or thinned, prior to being used to bond the wet gypsum into sheets or cornices. The hemp, presumably imported from somewhere like Africa, was delivered in course, heavy bales. It was fed into a machine with a rapidly revolving belt driven steel toothed barrel, which tore the course hemp into fluffy, fairy floss like strands. Jack Perrott was the operator. I loved watching this machine, although after more than a few minutes, operator and spectator alike were covered in lint like particles. No one wore safety masks in those days.

I was warned off the main sheet factory, both by my parents and the workers. Once when I annoyed a worker in there, he threw me in a vat of liquid plaster. I seem to recall I deserved it. It was almost impossible to come out of the factory clean anyway. The factory was very messy, fully of gypsum dust and dried plaster chips. It was usually only



Plaster factory, 1958
(Rob Wuchatsch).

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Advertisement in
Reservoir Times, 26
October 1955 (Rob
Wuchatsch).



Snow at plaster factory, 19 July 1951
(Rob Wuchatsch).

cleaned once a year, when it closed for the Christmas/New Year holidays.

The waste plaster or slurry was wheeled out of the factory in barrows and dumped in a paddock just south of the factory. Robert Street now cuts through the old dump and when excavations for the street were being carried out, most of the old slurry was taken away. Some still remains and comes to the surface when people dig post holes or water and gas pipes need repairs.

During school holidays, I sometimes went on jobs with my father, when he installed or fixed the plaster sheets into new houses. Most of the jobs were in the northern suburbs, but sometimes we visited far away places, such as North Balwyn or Burwood. The fixers worked in pairs, nailing plaster sheets to the walls and ceilings, prior to another team coming in to finish off. I was discouraged from going anymore after playing a joke on one of the workmen. I put nails in his socks while he was standing on a ladder, holding up a heavy sheet with both hands. He wasn't impressed.

Joe Glen's daughter Jill was a singer who appeared on many TV shows and at dances during the 1970s.



Old hemp teaser barrel (Rob Wuchatsch).

I loved the old ramshackle toilet, which stood behind the factory, under a huge old pine tree. It had weatherboards missing from the south wall and you could sit there and look out, the view extending as far as the old Lutheran church and cemetery. Toilet paper wasn't used in that toilet, just newspaper and old copies of the Pink Pages, which were later superseded by the Yellow Pages.

After Northern Fibrous Plaster relocated to Settlement Road in July 1957, several former employees started up a new company, Magpie Plaster, to operate the old factory. The owners were Tom 'Chick' Drummond, who played 94 games for the Collingwood Football Club from 1916–22, was a member of its 1917 and 1919 premiership teams, and captained the club in 1922; and Gerry Gleeson. Magpie Plaster carried on business from July 1957 to July 1962. They were followed by A.A. Lehmann and then a man named Murphy. Entries in my father's cash book cease during 1965 which fits with my memory of when the plaster factory closed. In the late 1960s, my father and I removed all the factory fittings and demolished the drying racks. Today nothing remains to mark the site of one of Lalor's first industrial enterprises.

Burgess Brothers and Wood also had a fibrous plaster factory in High Street, Thomastown. It operated there from about 1954–58, then relocated to another factory behind the Thomastown Hotel, where it continued until the mid 1960s. The Jutson family also ran a plaster factory in High Street, Lalor for many years.

THOMASTOWN LUTHERAN CHURCH SERVICES

Services are held on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2.30 pm at the Thomastown Lutheran Church, German Lane, Lalor. For further details, see the Calvary Lutheran Church website at www.greensborough.lutheran.org.au.

VISITING ZIEBELL'S FARMHOUSE

Ziebell's Farmhouse is open on Sunday 10:30 am–3 pm and Tuesday 11.30 am–2 pm.

For enquiries, call 0418 552 557 or enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au

Tours can be organised for groups of ten or more people. For information and bookings contact 0418 552 557 or johnsdfry@gmail.com

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