

# Dance group keeps German traditions alive



Ready to perform - Reinhard Struve and Jakob (10) and Lara (5) Struve. Photo by Phil Martin

by Sarah Martin

Germany is a place of strong traditions with hearty food, delicious beer and energetic dancing.

Bund der Bayern is an Adelaide-based dance troupe that has a passion for Schuhplattlern, a traditional dance style from the Bavarian region of Germany.

The group practices at the German Club in the city with several of its members from the Adelaide Hills, where there is also a strong connection to German heritage and traditions.

Crafers West resident and Bund der Bayern leader Reinhard Struve said the group is excited about upcoming performances at Schutzenfest in January and then Volkstanzfest over the Easter weekend.

"Schutzenfest is our next big thing," Reinhard said. "Our program is always busy and this year the festival is trying to bring out even more German aspects and create a more

authentic feel. "We will be doing about three performances each day so we won't get bored.

"In the past we used to also run a stall but this year we are at liberty to just walk around the Schutzenfest grounds and do spontaneous performances.

"That means we can really enjoy ourselves, engage with visitors and do workshops as we go if we feel like it."

In early 2013 Bund der Bayern travelled to Germany for a cultural dance program where locals were impressed and surprised by their commitment to the traditional dance.

The group will be bringing some newly learned aspects from that trip to their performances.

"The trip to Germany really extended our knowledge," Reinhard said.

"One really tangible thing we brought back home is that whip cracking to traditional music is quite popular in Bavaria.

"We hadn't done it before but once we had seen it in action we organised about nine whips to bring back. Schutzenfest will be our inaugural whip cracking performance."

Reinhard said even some of the younger members of Bund der Bayern are having a go.

"We have about five children who use the whips now," Reinhard said.

"I recently thought perhaps it is a bit dangerous and not a good idea for them to crack the whips without hand protection.

"I decided to get gloves for them and when I went to shop the lady asked why I needed them. "When I told her I was teaching children to crack a whip she looked at me unbelievably. It was very funny."

Bund der Bayern are also hosting Volkstanzfest, a National German dance festival during Easter this year.

The event from April 3-5 will be host to about 300 participants, including two Bavarian

dance troupes visited by Bund der Bayern last year.

"It is a bi-annual event in Australia and usually various groups in various states take a turn," Reinhard said. "We haven't had it for ten years or more so we have put our hands up to run the show. "We will all enjoy dancing and social events at the German Club in Adelaide as well as a visit to Hahndorf on Saturday, April 4 where we will dance in public spaces on the main street of town. We will speak about our travels to Germany, which was certainly a worthwhile experience and I think a few of other troupes were interested in how that event went."

Both Schutzenfest and Volkstanzfest are public events, with everyone welcome.

"By all means people are welcome to come along, watch and enjoy," Reinhard said.

For more information about Bund der Bayern visit [www.bundderbayern.org](http://www.bundderbayern.org) or phone Reinhard Struve on 0423 496 194.