NEWSLETTER



COMMITTEE

The Benalla Family History Research Group is a friendly, helpful and dedicated group of people who are striving to collate our local history and maintain it for future generations.

Visitors are always made very welcome and the Research team are available to assist with any enquiries on finding relatives and ancestors.

The group encourages and welcomes new members as the resources available are very valuable to a person seeking to learn more about their family tree.

Our normal open days are Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 4 pm.

Please note we are not open on Saturdays except by appointment.

We will open by appointment during other times if necessary, please contact us via the contact form on our Website ...

or email our Secretary Bill Willett secretary@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org PRESIDENT: Chick Walker VICE PRESIDENT: Wendy Webster TREASURER: Tom Sloane SECRETARY: Bill Willett RESEARCH OFFICER: Wendy Maxwell LIBRARIAN: Judi Ryan MINUTE SECRETARY: Wendy Webster IT OFFICER: Neil White SMALL PROJECT OFFICER: Carole Gray EDITOR: Meredith Tolliday

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RESEARCH & LIBRARY SUPPORT TEAM

Doreen Hillier, Wendy Maxwell, Chick Walker, Wendy Webster, Joy Cole, Rosemary Archer, Pam Herbert, Carole Gray

NEWSLETTER CONTENTS:

- Editor's Introduction- Meredith Tolliday
- Presidents Report- Chick Walker
- Research Desk News- Completion of many family names
- Library News- Judi Ryan- Lots of new books
- What's going on in the rooms- Rate book indexing ongoing
- Dates of Interest- Monthly committee meeting
- Special Guests at AGM- Australian Indian Historical Society Inc
- Annual General Meeting- Election of Office Bearers
- Farewell from Joan Hooper
- First Life Memberships Awarded- Joan and Beryl
- Grant for Photocopier
- Special projects- Family Charts
- Family Reunion-Bill Willett
- A Reflections of times- Olive Moody
- Our wonderful supporters- Please support them when you can.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Hello Everyone,

Your newsletter is collated from information received from a variety of sources. It will only be good reading if I have lots of information to share with you. So, if you have a family history story you would like to share or some photos that would be of interest please let me know.

I would like to thank our members for their input this month. This is a large newsletter as we have not put one out since March. I do hope you enjoy reading everything that is included.

Of note is

- Joan Hooper's farewell letter.
- We awarded our first Life Memberships this month. A report of this lovely day is included.

Do you have any fundraising ideas for the Group- if so please let us know.

You can contact me via my personal email address or leave articles at the group's room for me to collect. Or you may write to me at 169 Webb Road, Goorambat 3725. If you prefer to call me my home number is 5763 3229.

Thank you

Meredith

Meredith Tolliday Newsletter Editor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I think everyone has had enough of this cold weather and will be looking forward to warmer days.

Our rooms have been a bit quiet lately although research is still coming in at a steady pace.

Through a grant we are going to purchase a new photocopy machine which will make things a lot easier for us as we will be able to produce our own calendars etc, and keep our costs down.

Recently I obtained some old documents from a local family. They all date well before the 1900's, some of the old accounts are from-

Gregerson's Beehive Store J Reilly Flour Millers Watts Turnbull Stock and Station Agents Leacy Roller Flour Mills Halfhide Jewellers Sherwill's Butchery and many more, very interesting reading.

Later in the year we hope to have an Open Garden as a fundraiser. If anyone has ideas for a fundraising event, please let the group know.

Chick Walker President BFRG

Taken from The Euroa Advertiser November 24th 1916.

<u>News from the Research</u> <u>Desk</u>

Despite the cold weather we have had several people calling into our rooms to do some research or ask for some research to be done for them. The rest of our requests have come through email.

New research completed. We have researched quite a few properties lately with great success and find our rates books such an asset.

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NEW LIBRARY BOOKS

Are Indians an Ethnic Minority- Discovering Victoria Are Indians an Ethnic Minority- Camels and Trailblazers Are Indians an Ethnic Minority- Horses and Walers Are Indians an Ethnic Minority- Hawkers Are Indians an Ethnic Minority- Pictorial History

Australian Disasters

Benalla Shire Rates-Devenish, Mokoan and Central Ridings 1896-1897 Benalla Shire Rates-Devenish, Mokoan and Central Ridings 1901-1902 Benalla Shire Rates-Devenish, Mokoan and Central Ridings 1902-1903 Benalla Shire Rates-Devenish, Mokoan and Central Ridings 1903-1904 Benalla Shire Rates-Devenish, Mokoan and Central Ridings 1907-1908

Benalla Shire Rates-Tatong & Warrenbayne Ridings 1896-1897 Benalla Shire Rates-Tatong & Warrenbayne Ridings 1901-1902 Benalla Shire Rates-Tatong & Warrenbayne Ridings 1902-1903 Benalla Shire Rates-Tatong & Warrenbayne Ridings 1903-1904 Benalla Shire Rates-Tatong & Warrenbayne Ridings 1907-1908

BILLS Troughs From Farm to Factory Gippsland's Lucky City- A History of Sale James and Jabez BANFIELD Family History Myrtleford- Gateway to the Alps

We have had a book donated called "Together as One" by a very pleased researcher, Patrick Ferry, who was researching a Benalla man for this book and received considerable help from the research team. Can be found in the Military division in the compactus.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Garry Anderson, Michael Gray, Alan Flint, Margaret Hinds, Di Newton, Janet Cooper and Jenni Doig, we hope they enjoy their time with our Group, researching their Family Tree.

DATES OF INTEREST

The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday August 15th 11.30am.

Crystal Jordon and Len Kenna were our special guests at the Annual General Metting held on May 25th. Len gave us an overview of the Australian Indian Historical Society Inc. The great history of the Indian Hawkers who travelled throughout Australia, servicing the rural communities with goods. As well as those that served in the War. A very interesting topic for our AGM.













Link to their Facebook Group page. https://www.facebook.com/australianindianhistory/

The Benalla Rural City Mayor Cr Don Firth also attended the AGM, he was kind enough to take the chair for the Election of Office Bearers. No changes to those from last year's officers. Chick- President, Wendy W- Vice President, Bill-Secretary, Wendy W- Minutes Secretary, Tom- Treasurer, Judi- Librarian, Neil- Electronics, Research Officer- Wendy M, Small Projects Officer- Carole, Meredith- Editor.

We decided to have a group of people to organise any program events this year instead of having a specific person to make the decisions and arrangements.







At the Annual General Meeting Joan Hooper stood and read her farewell letter.

Goodbye to Family History...

I just wanted to take a few minutes to say goodbye and to thank all the friends I have made in the last 30 years or so in the Family History Group. Thinking of those 30 years has brought back loads of memories.

I began coming into meetings of a small group of people interested in researching more information about their forebears.

After a couple of moves we found a more permanent meeting place in the North-West corner of this building, the rest of the hall being stacked with donated furniture for victims of recent floods in Benalla in 1993.

I well remember buying a filing cabinet at a second-hand shop in Wodonga, overcoming my fear of

parallel parking in a very built up area. I think the cabinet may still be in use here!

As time went by we stacked the furniture further into another corner, each time taking a little more space for our evergrowing needs, especially the library.

From these humble beginnings and negotiations with the owners of the hall, our Group has gone ahead in leaps and bounds. The new century saw us fund raising to carpet the hall, to install heaters, coolers and compactors for our every increasing library articles and the installation of computers, all making our rooms comfortable and user friendly.

But it was not all work and no play, we made numerous trips to Melbourne finding much information in its available archives and the jolly atmosphere in the bus and or car trips.



We enjoyed reciprocal visits with closer groups and enjoyed the interaction of other like-minded folk at Family History Expos at Mulwala.

We brought ourselves to the notice of others at the Days in the Benalla Gardens and entered into the fun of Street Parades with floats at the Benalla Festivals.

My husband and I moved into Benalla a little over two years ago but it has taken a little while to settle in and with the ups and downs of our health, I find that I can't do what I used to be able to. I must mention here that having Beryl as a traveling companion enabled us both to attend night gatherings- even managing a late-night puncture when we even found it difficult to find the spare tyre!

I wish the best to the many who are keeping the Group going for others to enjoy and who may need help with their research.

And I say thank you and goodbye to the many friends I have made over the years of a most enjoyable and interesting hobby.

"May the Group continue to go on to bigger and better things.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Joan Hooper and Beryl Ilsley enjoyed a "day to remember". Following a delectable luncheon provided by the members of the Benalla Family Research Group.

President Beverly Walker commenced the proceedings by offering apologies from the Benalla Rural City Mayor Mr Don Firth, Mr Les Hooper and Bev and Graeme Howard.

Our secretary Bill Willett detailed that Joan and Beryl have been financial members for over thirty years each and both these ladies have supported the group's endeavours.

Over the years they have assisted in the recording of historical information, formulating family trees and numerous fund raising events.

Our president presented two decoratively framed Life Member certificates to Joan and Beryl. The afternoon concluded with the cutting of a large tiered cream sponge cake decorated with the names of the two recipients.



Joan and Beryl thanked all those present for the day, for the many life time friendships and for the privilege of being part of a friendly group.

Beryl Ilsley and Joan Hooper with their framed certificates in recognition of their wonderful service to the Benalla Family Research Group.



Back Row: Greg Kirk, Dawne Tonks, Cheryl Ann Menere, June Mayne, Mary Anne Hatters, Rupe Cheetham. Front Row:

Marg Hair, Beryl and Joan, Marj Campbell.

Those pictured above are also long time members of the Group and have worked with Joan and Beryl over the years and attended the presentation day to celebrate their Life Memberships on August 1st.





SUCCESSFUL GRANT

We have been successful in winning a grant from the Benalla Rural City Council for \$2000.00 to purchase a new or second hand A3/A4 photocopier. Grants were announced in June. Bill and Neil went along to the ceremony to accept the grant. The money has arrived in our account and now we have the pleasure of spending it on the best photo copier we can afford.

The \$2000.00 will not cover the entire cost of the machine but the committee has decided to use some of its own money stashed away by our hardworking treasurer, Tom to get the best results we can for the money invested.

Supplier has visited the rooms to check out the space and connection capabilities and took one of our calendars away with him to reproduce on the new machine as an example of the quality the new machine will be capable of. We are looking forward to viewing the result.

One of the criteria we set for the quote was that it needed to be super easy to use and the brains of the typical genealogist using it would be able to cope with the new technology without going into meltdown. We have been assured that it will be as near to a one button push as is possible to get a top quality black and white copy. And just a couple more buttons to push for a top-quality colour copy. It will be able to print on both sides of the paper at the same time, saving time and extra expense for paper. We will have a Maintenance Deal with the supplier to cover all maintenance, repairs, training and consumables required. Now don't get too excited, it will cost you to get a photocopy.

Costs yet to be worked out but guaranteed to be cheaper than we can get a copy done anywhere else, so a winner all round.

We should be able to produce booklets and fliers to a quality not seen in the rooms before. Just a thought, we may be able to finally publish those long-awaited family histories so many of us have hiding in a drawer somewhere, or still unfinished somewhere on the hard drive. The research team are hanging out with bated breath to get their grubby little fingers on these new buttons, so they can start to produce their new project Family Trees solely within the group's rooms.

I think it will be a great addition to the already well equipped and stocked group library.

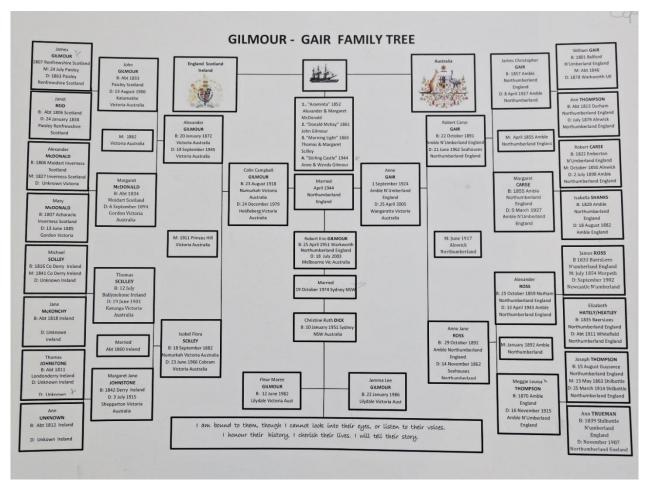
NEW PROJECT FOR THE GROUP

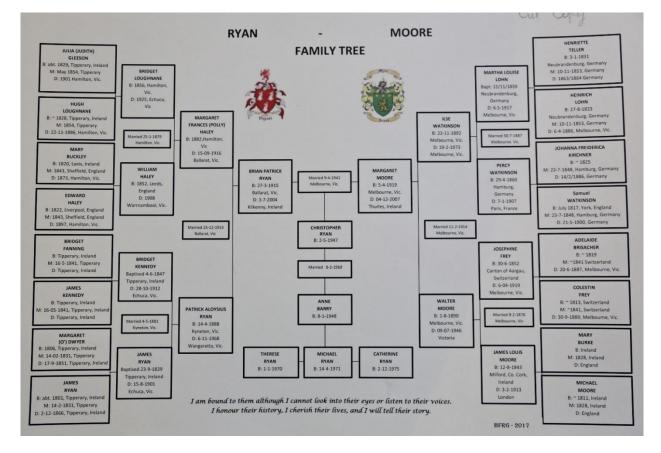
Some time ago, a lady came into the group rooms and enquired if we could produce a Family Tree suitable for being framed and hung on a wall in her home. Research team went into action and said "Of course" and the result was amazing.

Cost depends on how much data you can supply and how much research needs to be done to complete the data needed to produce an elegant and informative piece of memorabilia. We have produced three and four generation charts and are branching out into adding shipping records and including mapping in the design of the piece.

Photographs and family crests can be added as wished and the list goes on ad infinitum. Girls have produced their own family trees for their own use, and are champing at the bit to get stuck into more for clients anywhere. We have been using a professional framer to finish the projects, and with the skill of the framer, and the knowledge and artistic expertise we have developed in making up these charts, we are now capable of making some very attractive memorabilia that can be matched to any décor in any room.

FAMILY CHARTS





KEEPING IN TOUCH By Bill Willett

Just three little insignificant words when written individually, but put them together and WOW, all sorts of things come to mind. How, When and where?

On that new-fangled evil necessity- the computer or tablet and endless emails back and forth; *You can save the replies and file them for later confirmation etc.*

On the telephone for hours and hours; at least you have to engage another of your senses, your ears and mouth, but can only save them in your head.

More Snail Mail; and the hours writing with shaky hand and then the dreaded wait for a week or fortnight (and getting longer) for the anticipated reply.

Or perhaps A Reunion; travelling, enjoying the fresh air, getting away from boring and familiar surrounds, using all your senses, letting your hair down, and then uniting with long lost and never before met relatives.

Which will it be?

Having just returned from a most successful get together to celebrate my Great Great grandmothers 190th birthday at Fryers Town, near Castlemaine, I know which one I would prefer. A **Reunion, hands down.**

All you have to have is a competent co-ordinator, who has heaps of time and a good contact list, and Bob's your Uncle. Yeah, right.

Well, we had just that, our cousin Catherine, who had incidentally written a new chapter in the Life of Sarah Spikes, our ancestor.

Some years earlier, our late cousin, Nell Heath, had written a book called "From Cleveland Hill to Kangaroo", A tribute to Sarah (nee Spikes) and John Spencer, a detailed writing of the life of Sarah and John, and their descendants. It tabulated the efforts and struggles of an English family, moving from an English winter to an Australian summer and the progress the family has made since.

Aunty Nell made sure the direct descendants of these two, all got a copy of her book and all had an opportunity to contribute to it. I have read mine from cover to cover a number of times, and am still astounded by the veracity and determination of these two people and the adversities they had to overcome to survive.

The book included a copy of 14 letters written by Sarah and John back to their parents in England. These letters were given to our cousin Marie, Catherine's Mother when she visited England some years back to visit the family left, and to see for herself, where her ancestors once trod. They have since been donated to the Castlemaine Arts Museum for posterity and safekeeping.

January 31++1858.

Dear Farther & Mother,

We received your letter was glad to here you were all well and also things were prosperous with you with one exception the floods.

Dear Friends

I am hartely sorry to convay to you the death of my poor wife but still living in glory she was confined on Monday the 18th of January the day we received your letter of the sun and was well never better was us on the satterday did a little sewing on Sunday. was rather worse went for the doctor he said it was the commencement of the Millery feaver he was over on Monday she was worse on Tuesday I sent for another doctor as I was ansious for her recovery but he said all the Doctors in the collony was of no huse for it ad goot to her brain but he ordered me to shave her hed: but judge by my feelingsI tauld my mate to right for Tom from town Whilst he was doing so she got worse and at 11 in the night she died but I waited out till the last minett as she wished 🖉 me to be with her but I am happy to say she ad all the attendance as could be ad for every neabour in the flat gave assistance night and day for she was respected by all. Wee buried on Thursday at fryers town in the consecrated ground and the kindness of mymates and neabours I never forget for Mr.Selby the Stor Keeper went 4 miles to fetch an American wagon to carre yher to her resting place. Mr. Thomson formely a mate of mine attended with his spring cart and a Mr. Meeve r with his Doctor Malcolm attended her the same doctor as she ad before a man she put great faith in. The child is quiet well a very fine little fellow. It is at preasant with a lady the name of Mrs. Frances Spencer from Oak Brewery near bath she came in at the time Sarah died and wished to take it for a time. As you well now my circumstances and Johnny his not well but the greatest releaf I have is Tom Spikes we got im up on Friday night and he is going to work with me so well do better I hope together and if we have luck we will return to our native land when we recrute our funds for this has drained them, and O what a returning what labour for my pains think of out parting in London the misery of the voyage the hundres of miles traverling under a Australian sun lying under gum trees and now to be parted from one that I so greatly valued the very joy of my life but Gods will be don he rules all for the best but how ard here so my hut a home for mychinder but not a word to sooth my great allass Poor Sarah she is gone but I trust in the Lord we will soon meat again in the land of the glory for she said she was perfectly happy and I hope the Lord received her dear soul but I must conclude with my kind love to you all send this to London I will right again shortly Tom is righting home at the same time but O what news to receave but still worse for me to convay them, We dresday Evening whe have a change in the weather tis week their would have bean hopes of Sarah recovery but the time she was bad the heat was fearfull the glass stood from 112 to 120 and bush fires in every directions and the most alarming werl wind I ever saw carrying everything away with it. But I conclude as my hands is pretty full having all to do hoping you will excuse my ruff letter for I scarse can make a righting of it give my kind love to all engineering frieds.

So I remain yours truly. J.T.Spencer

> Of course this letter would have been handrwitten not typed. Added an aged look to give some interest to the letter.

KEEPING IN TOUCH By Bill Willett

Continued

Catherine's book details the early life of Sarah Spikes, complete with photos and treasured memories of past times. Again, we all received a copy.

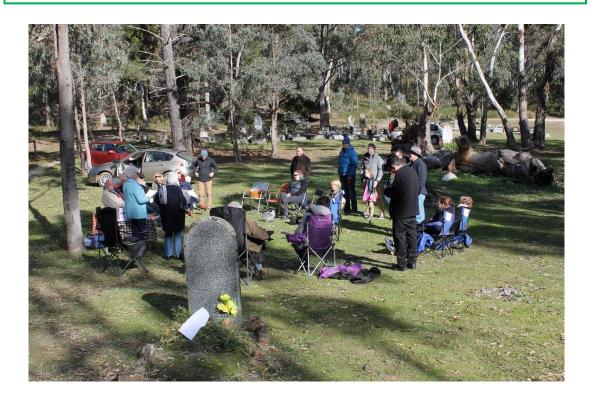
The get together took place at the Fryers Town Cemetery, around Sarah's grave. Several of the aforementioned letters were read by direct descendants, and one, (transcribed above as it was written) John's letter home to report the death of his wife Sarah, bought a few tears to the eyes of all present.

Apart from the -4.7 C degree temperature on the morning of the get together, it was a thrill to meet some rellies I hadn't met before, and to catch up with others I hadn't seen for some time. Lunch was shared among the crew, complete with a chocolate cake baked for the special occasion.

Photos taken then back into the cars for a quick journey to the original properties owned by John and Sarah. A visit to the Church in Castlemaine where their last two children were Christened followed by a light afternoon cuppa and then away home.

Fantastic weekend with such interesting topics covered and discussed. Well done and thank you Catherine.

See. It's as easy as falling off a log.



by the Author- Olive Moody

When they said give a rough outline of your family, one did not think they meant really rough rough

"The day is 15th of May 1847, sitting in the Independent Church in Van Diemen's Land (a land later to be known as Tasmania) we are awaiting the marriage of Captain Joseph Cracklin's son, a 24 year old young Captain William Cracknell, who was born on this island in a place called New Norfolk, to be wed, to the bride Ann (Nancy) 'WILLIAMS', age 20, her 38 year old brother Captain James Williams is here and so is their father Thomas (Weller) WILLIAMS."

Such a HAPPY occasion for all, especially me, like WOW it is better than all the weddings that go before and after. As one looks around the church one sees that there is not A CONVICT in the house.

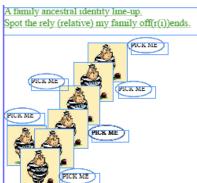
Wow!

Who's house does not have a family relative who is A CONVICT. Relief settles in knowing this is going to be good, checking one's heritage and ancestral past, one will be discovering some interesting tales. All true, of course there will be no lies or sordid tales. The black written ink never lies. It is all so clear and understandable.

One must be feeling so good, so it is a relief to know that there is not A CONVICT in the Church. On a closer inspection and a second look the English language is deceiving me as Ann's father is no more than Tomas (Wheller) Williams from Llanvillo in Brecon, Wales. He was born in 1767 at Llanfillo, Brecon Wales and he arrived as a convict. CONVICT Thomas Wheller Williams, he arrived on an unknown date on the convict transport ship "HMS Calcutta" to Sorrento, Victoria, Australia, (nowadays in Victoria) and then by barque, Ocean" to Van Diemen's Land with Governor Collins expedition in 1804. He was one of the first arrivals in Van Diemen's Land.

But that cannot be true as on further inspection there is not A CONVICT in sight, the Church is halffull of CONVICTS. One of the witnesses is CONVICT Edward Lucas (no way yes that's right LUCAS HEIGHTS connection) with his nine CONVICT relatives. And so the count continues, 20, 21, 22.....

(Whoops one must have surely missed one or two or three or four..... So another count and search goes on.)



My worst fears are realized, one sleeps uncomfortably (while still countingdefinitely not sheep). Or is that wrong to say as they (THE CONVICTS (22 of them to date) and everyone else) seem to get on alright together and together they have forged (shhh one is not sure if



you can mention that word out loud) a life with their own story and with me stuck in it at the end of a family line.

So it is now, as my (A CONVICT) family lineage ends, hopefully my brother's and sister's will forge on. (That did not come out exactly the way it was intended). Whoops, one has used that word again. Which one is that? Shhhh, (not telling), hide it. You obviously do not mean "forge" or is that "A" or is it "C O N V I C T". One should not have to spell it out. (I'm Looking out for my relative FRIENDS, cause we look after each other like we look after ourselves)

OUR WEBSITE

Our website is full of great information and is easy to navigate. When you have some time please check it out. Click on the links below to learn more about the Rate Index, Family Histories, or publications. Or when online click on the relevant tabs to see the information as shown on the next pages.



http://www.benallafamilyresearchgroup.org/rateindex/surnames http://www.benallafamilyresearchgroup.org/familyhistories http://www.benallafamilyresearchgroup.org/publications http://www.benallafamilyresearchgroup.org/featurestories

BENALLA CEMETERY WALK MAP

William Maginnis, Robert Campbell, Rev. A. C. McConnan, Dorothy Floate, Geo. Sharpe, William McKellar, Hugh Moodie, Malcolm McEachem, Rev. John Ride, Fr. John L. Scanlan, Corporal Sambo Goon Tack, George Eugene "Joey" Palmer, Richard Clark, William Carpender Bond, Joe Byrne, George Edwin Read, Nuns' Grave, Adam Rye, Jane Lloyd, Mary Ann Quinn, Martin Cherry, Hon. Willis Little, Dr. John Nicholson, Dr. Arthur E. Barrington, Thomas Lloyd.

You will see many of these names reflected as street names in Benalla.

Of note-Maginness Street – although this is a different spelling McConnan Street Ride Avenue McKellar Street Byrne Street Willis Little Drive Nicholson Court Barrington Street Sharpe Street Bond Street



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The Benalla Family History Research Group is a friendly, helpful and dedicated group of people who are striving to collate our local history and maintain it for future generations.

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