

## COMMITTEE

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Hello everyone,

It's time for another newsletter. Well, it's June, and winter is well and truly upon us. At the time of writing, it's cold, wet and windy, with snow forecast for the Alps. The snow bunnies will be pleased. At the Family Research Group, it's full steam ahead. We have just had our annual general meeting, which ushered in some changes. These changes will be detailed later in the newsletter.

Regarding any inquiries for family research, or inquiries in general, the rooms are open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am to 4pm, or contact us on the Website, or email our Secretary Jane Rushworth – [secretary@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org](mailto:secretary@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org) or our President Bill Willett – [president@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org](mailto:president@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org)

### *President's Report.*

#### *AGM, May 2022*

Firstly, can I say a very big thank you to all the officers and their respective support teams for the wonderful work you have accomplished over the past twelve months, and the support and help you have given me personally during that time. It is very much appreciated. Also to Danny for attending our meetings and reporting the council news.

Another big thank you must go to Neil and Jane for the way they organised the last Heritage Festival Program and were able to get all the other history groups involved in the week of activities.

With a very interrupted year with Covid and other things, we have come out the end all intact and better than we were last year. Well done.

My immediate concern for the future is the matter of having to find other accommodation if and when the building is sold. With all our resources we have gathered over particularly the last ten or twelve years crammed into four big compactors, I can't think of any other building in Benalla that would hold us, for the same rent as we pay now, so it is of importance that everyone keep their eyes open for any vacancies around the city that would accommodate us. I don't think there is any doubt

that the building will be sold, but when is the big unknown. We have asked the Church for a six month extension on the sale so we can at least pack up and store our stuff before hitting the footpath.

Our plans for the years events are well underway, with the first programme for April nearly completed. A four day event including some of the other History and Museum groups around the city are being organised to provide a comprehensive program for History week between 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April.

Our call for volunteers to help out in various jobs throughout the group has been fruitful and as a result we have gained about four or five volunteers to help Jane and others organise and scan files and events being planned. Plenty of room for more though.

Another hope for the city is the retention and re-invigorating of the old High School site which is under severe pressure by vandals and inactivity. A committee has been formed to work towards the site being used by the community as a "hub", and to gather support from various sources such as other community groups and Benalla Rural City Council. A Face Book page has been initiated under the banner of "Benalla High School Action Group" for you to access and show your support and ideas.

Hope to see some more of the members in the rooms each Tuesday and Wednesday for a chat, biccyy and cuppa.

Cheers,

Bill

### **Secretary Report**

2022 is looking fabulous for the Benalla Family Research Group!!

We now have 62 members. A hearty thank you to our long time members for your on-going support.

#### **HISTORY NETWORK:**

This year BFRG initiated the Benalla History, Research, and Archive Network. Benalla district has an extremely large, valuable, and irreplaceable local history collection, the result of the work of more than 25 volunteer-based groups over many years, some in operation for 40 plus years. Collections include family histories, museums, aviation, military memorabilia, migration stories, and education collections. Until recently the groups have operated in relative isolation of each other. The Benalla History, Research, and Archive Network will regularly bring these groups together to make it easier for us to keep abreast of the vast expanse of projects, collections, and changes underway in Benalla, to put the spotlight on our valuable community resource, to benefit from collective action, and to ensure irreplaceable local history collections are nurtured well into the future.

#### **AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL 26 – 29 April 2022:**

Keep the dates free! The BFRG is participating in the Australian Heritage Festival from 26 – 29 April 2022! The calendar of events (attached) will run over 4 days – double on the 2021 2 days. We listened to your feedback from 2021, chatted with our network colleagues and now look forward to hosting an inspiring and fascinating 4-day heritage week of workshops, guest speakers, a DNA Master Class, cemetery and town tours, museums and much more as plans are finalised. Event information and bookings can be made via <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/ahf/vic/> OR email [events@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org](mailto:events@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org)

#### **VOLUNTEERS:**

We need you!!! Join us for fun, curious history discoveries, skill sharing and a great sense of achievement. Our 2022 project list is ambitious and will happen with your support.

**2022 PROJECTS:**

- Event: National History Festival.
- Collating BFRG's own history.
- Developing networks.
- Project: Benalla High School.
- Collating Family histories, and House histories.
- 2022 Training program.

**SKILLS** we use include:

- Excel, Publisher, and Word.
- On-line and hard-copy research.
- Email.
- Printing, scanning & copying.
- Sorting, indexing, and cataloguing.
- Small event planning.

You will be part of an experienced team and we offer you support all the way. You might have skills and experiences that are not listed in the above list, that you can see we need. Depending on the task, you might prefer to work from home.

**NOTE** that BFRG:

- Is registered with Centrelink as an authorised volunteer organisation.
- Opens Tues and Wed 10am -4pm at 9 Church Street, Benalla.
- Follows Vic.gov.au public health business guidelines.

Call in Tues and Wed 10am-4pm at 9 Church Street, Benalla, OR Email [secretary@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org](mailto:secretary@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org) or via facebook.

## **RESEARCH REPORT**

Research via email for the last 3 months has been even more quiet than the previous quarter. Requests have included shipping records for the McVicar family, the history and a photo of the old original house on the local property of "Marangan" on the Goomalibee Road. Family research for the Martin family of Thoona, also for the Stewart/Murphy family, and rates for the Brown family of Samaria. Several people have come into the research room to do their own research.

Kaye and I have been busy helping a member of our group with her family research, of which we will produce two family trees for her when it is completed. Several Mitchell/Carylon trees have been completed for a local family. The Lone Graves project is still ongoing, likewise the Farm Properties Book and Research of Houses and Buildings in Benalla.

Wendy Maxwell  
Research Officer.

## **LIBRARY NEWS**

We have added numerous books to the library over the past 2 years, in fact too many to list here, so I will list some under the following 3 categories.

### Family Histories

Hide, Hanlon and Carey, Barker, Davies, Josepheson, Robertson and Moriaty, Dosser, Elizabeth and Jonathan Harris, Thomas Gawne, William Davey, George Bradshaw, The Cheethams from Manchester, Pettis, Harrison, The Willetts that stayed in England, James

Caithness, Essenhigh, Abbott and Plunkett, Levy and Howell, John and Mary Clutterbuck, Richard and Barbara Jack, Cornelius, Sellers, Oliver Ambler, Chapman, McConnan.

#### Town Histories

Victoria:- Bairnsdale, Wedderburn, South Melbourne, Maryborough, Nannine, Devenish, Boorhaman, Lockington, Myrtleford, Rutherglen, Pearcedale, and Ripplebrook.

New South Wales:- Botany, Balranald, Ivanhoe, Canterbury, Jindera, Talbingo, and Trilby.

Northern Territory:- Darwin.

#### Cemeteries

Victoria:- Birchip and Winton

#### D.N.A – WHEN YOUR DNA MATCH DOESN'T HAVE A TREE.

People who have researched their D.N.A., have many reasons why they have not established their family tree. They may only be interested in their ethnicity, they may be adopted, or new to Family Research, and as yet have not got around to it. They may have received a D.N.A. kit as a present, and are not interested in taking it further. Or they may be sick, or have lost their job, just to name a few.

1. If it is a high match send a message, they may have a private tree or a tree on another site. Ask if they would provide you with family information.
2. The person may not have linked their tree to their D.N.A. results as yet.
3. If they have an unlinked tree to you, view the match, it will show what public trees they have. Remember some trees are just managed by the user (eg. Spouses trees) so are not related to you.
4. Check the users other matches and determine if any of these match to you also. Do any of these have trees that have common surnames or places to match your family.
5. There may be a hint in their User name. For instance John Martin would more than likely be related to the Martin Family.
6. A Test Administrator is someone who manages the D.N.A account for another person who took the test. Other accounts the administrator has may have some kind of shared relationship. The administrator may compare other tests that are available to them, to see if there is a match to the one you are trying to identify. If one of those accounts has similar information, it might be useful in your investigation.

Many people have the same or similar Username on different websites, so Google the username (or part of it) and the word genealogy. You might find an online tree or old message board postings about the person's family tree.

Judi Ryan  
Librarian

#### **VISITOR TO THE ROOMS**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of December last year, the Family History Group, received a visit from the Federal member for Indi, Helen Haines. Over a pleasant morning tea, our President Bill Willett, described the purpose of the Group (Family Research), and what we are trying to accomplish, along with the problems that are being encountered. Helen was an attentive listener, and discussed ways in which she could be of assistance, as a Federal member of

Parliament. Good to have politicians showing interest in volunteer groups in their electorate.

### **OBITUARY**

The Group Committee was saddened to hear of the passing, over the Christmas period, of the well known Benalla district identity, and BFRG member, Mr. Tony Williams. Tony was active in the Real Estate industry for many years, he was a more than capable bowler, and occasionally turned his hand to entertaining. At the time of his passing, Tony was in the process of writing a book, detailing the townfolk of Benalla that he had known, and changes to the town, that had occurred over the years. I understand that the book will be published at a later date, and will be called "A Fella from Benalla".

### **AWARDS**

At this year's Benalla Australia Day Awards, our former Group Secretary Wendy Webster and her husband Dave, were the proud recipients of the Winton Achiever of the Year Award. The Australia Day awards recognize the invaluable contribution of members of our community, and thanks them for their commitment and dedication to helping others. Well done Wendy and Dave.

### **SNAIL MAIL**

The BFRG held a Christmas party in December last year, and invited members and friends to attend. Subsequently an invitation was mailed to Beryl Ilsley at St. James. The invitation was mailed from Benalla on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021, and was received by Beryl living only twenty miles away, on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Snail mail indeed.

### **DEAD MAN'S PENNY**

In November last year, the BFRG received an email, asking them if they could trace any living residents of a Benalla soldier named John Kissick, who had died at Gallipoli, in 1915. Local residents Susan and Michael Spelic, had found a WW1 medal with John Kissick's name on it, and they wanted to hand it back to one of his descendants.

The BFRG research team knew of Kissick Family members residing in Benalla and found a great nephew of John Kissick living in Benalla, Graeme Heywood. Group President Bill Willett approached Graeme with the story, and he agreed to give his contact details to Susan Spelic. Graeme and Susan agreed to meet at the BFRG rooms where the medal, called a "Dead Man's Penny", would be exchanged.

Robert and Martha Kissick married in Victoria in 1877, and went on to have 8 children, six girls, and two sons, Robert and John. Robert died in 1888, aged 3 months, and is buried in Benalla cemetery with his parents.

John enlisted on August 18, 1914, at Broadmeadows. He joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, with service number 292. On June 25<sup>th</sup> 1915, he died aboard the hospital ship "Gascon" off Gallipoli, from gunshot wounds to the abdomen. He was buried "at sea", three miles from Gaba Tepe, on the Gallipoli Peninsular, by Rev Lee Warner. By the time Martha Kissick received news of her son's death, she was a widow, living in Nunn St. Benalla.

Susan and Michael Spelic purchased the home in 2021, and commenced renovations. When Michael, who is a builder, pulled an old mantel piece down, he found John Kissick's medal

wedged down the back, along with remnants of family letters, old lottery tickets, and an old dance card.

The Dead Man's Penny is a bronze disc, about 12cm across, depicting Britannia and a Lion, and bears the inscription "He died for freedom and honour". The name of the soldier is engraved on the right hand side of the medal, but no rank, unit or decorations are shown, befitting equality of the sacrifice made by all casualties. These medals were issued to the families of fallen Australians soldiers in 1922. It is engraved with John Kissick's name.

On November 24<sup>th</sup> 2021, the Spelic family met Graeme and Elaine Heywood at the BFRG rooms to present them with these precious items.

It was a special gesture from one family to another, that deeply touched all BFRG members that were present, and especially the Spelic and Heywood families.

BFRG President Bill Willett said:- "Thank you to Susan and Michael, it's been a pleasure for our Group to be involved with this uplifting story. Good people do exist".

### **FOR THE FUNNY BONE**

John was on his death bed and gasped pitifully "Grant me one last request dear".

"Of course John", his wife said softly.

"Six months after I die", said John, "I want you to marry Bob".

"But I thought you hated Bob" she said.

With his last breath John said "I do".

The trouble with aging:- I felt like my body had become totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club, and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

On the upcoming election:- The reason politicians try so hard to get re-elected, is that they would hate to have to make a living under the laws that they have passed.

### **OUR SPONSORS**

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We design clean, mobile friendly websites with a strong emphasis  
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National Trust presents in conjunction with the Benalla Family Research  
ALL US 03 5757 6330  
Group Inc

Monday to Friday 9:30 - 5:30  
<http://www.codegarden.com.au>



## Lone Graves and Other Curiosities!

April 26<sup>th</sup> to April 29<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Benalla Family Research Group (BFRG)**

9 Church Street, Benalla

Date	Event 10:30am – 12:30pm	Event 1:30pm – 3:30pm
Tues 26 April 	Session 01 – Welcome. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration</li> <li>• Meet the Team</li> <li>• Orientation to the Festival</li> </ul> Held @ BFRG rooms <b>COST FREE</b>	Session 02 – Stories and One Workshop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Lone Graves” - The Historians story</li> <li>• Skill session: How to Research Lone Graves.</li> </ul> Held @ BFRG rooms <b>COST \$5</b>
Wed 27 April 	Session 03 – Talk and Walk. <b>Meet at Benalla Cemetery.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen - Jeff Knight “Role of Cemetery Trusts”.</li> <li>• Guided Benalla Cemetery Walk – Visit graves connecting stories to Benalla street names.</li> </ul> <b>COST \$5</b>	Session 04 – Three Workshops in ONE. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Do we need to start again?” - The impact of DNA on family trees.</li> <li>• On-Line resources - Trove, Public Office Records, and Australian War records.</li> <li>• “Manage a Timeline” - Using basic Excel to record your family research data.</li> </ul> Held @ BFRG rooms <b>COST \$5</b>
Thurs 28 April 	Session 05 - DNA Master Class. Emeritus Professor Dr. Jim Burnell will talk about – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How DNA carries the genetic code that controls who we are.</li> <li>• The use of "heritage companies" in disclosing our relationships.</li> <li>• How it is possible to have three parents.</li> </ul> Held @ BFRG rooms <b>COST \$5</b>	Session 06 – “How to tell a good story or two”. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest Speaker: Author John Barry "Whatever of Glory" - stories of those from Benalla and district who gave their lives in the Great War</li> <li>• Guest Speaker: Author Barry O'Connor “Benalla’s Fourth Famous Son” – The story of an extraordinary Australian, Arthur Baird.</li> </ul>  Held @ BFRG rooms <b>COST \$5</b>

<p>Fri 29 April</p>	<p><b>OPEN 10:00am – 2:00pm</b>  <b>Benalla Migrant Camp</b></p>  <p>A unique exhibition of photos and artefacts telling of life at the Benalla Migrant Camp 1949-1967.  <b>Held @ Hut 11 Benalla</b>  <b>Airport Hangar Lane, off Samaria Rd Benalla.</b>  <b>COST – Gold Coin DONATION</b></p>	<p><b>Session 07 – “Town Walk and History” with Benalla Historical Society.</b></p>  <p>Discover back stories to many significant buildings and features in Benalla’s CBD.  <b>Meet @ BFRG rooms</b></p> <p><b>COST – Gold Coin DONATION</b></p>
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**TO BOOK** sessions: [events@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org](mailto:events@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org)

Numbers limited. Walk-ins welcome if places available.

**BOOKINGS BY FRIDAY, 22 APRIL 2022**

**CONTACT BFRG Tues and Wed: [events@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org](mailto:events@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org)**

**DISCLAIMER**

The group do not hold themselves responsible for statements or opinions expressed by authors of newspapers or articles published in this newsletter. We realize that the attitudes of people who lived in the past, are not consistent with the attitudes of people today.

Well that’s it for this newsletter. It’s hard to believe that we are well into 2022 already. Time flies when you’re having fun. The next edition will contain more of the same information and humor, which I hope will maintain reader’s interest. Bye for now,

John Crawford,  
Editor.