



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER
November 2019

Cnr Myokum & Stuart Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482
OPEN: TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS 10 AM – 12 PM
MARKET DAYS (3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH) 9 AM-1 PM

WHAT A HOOT!

Dignitaries galore at the grand re-opening of the Machinery Shed during the October market. Inspirational speeches of congratulation were presented by Society President Stephen Hall, Susan Tsicalas, Ben Franklin MLC, and Deputy Mayor Cr Sarah Ndiaye. The ribbon was officially cut by Ben, Sarah and Tamara Smith MP for Ballina. The magnificent work by volunteers Susan and David Sharonowitz to prepare the exhibits was officially recognised by speakers.

Also enjoying the occasion were Society Patrons Cr Basil Cameron and Frank Mills OAM. One of the original shed workers, Sid Fisher, was in attendance, along with members Gerard Walker, Chris Cooney, Liz and Martin Walton, Lyn & Charlie Diehm and George Alidenes.

Byron Shire General Manager, Mark Arnold, was accompanied by staff members Mick Crosbie and Alexandra Keen. Of course, the whole day was not complete without the presence of the builders, Tom and Alex McHugh, the main building painter Kevin Teale and Samantha Wortlehock, the artist commissioned to paint the wonderful mural on the western side of the Machinery Shed.





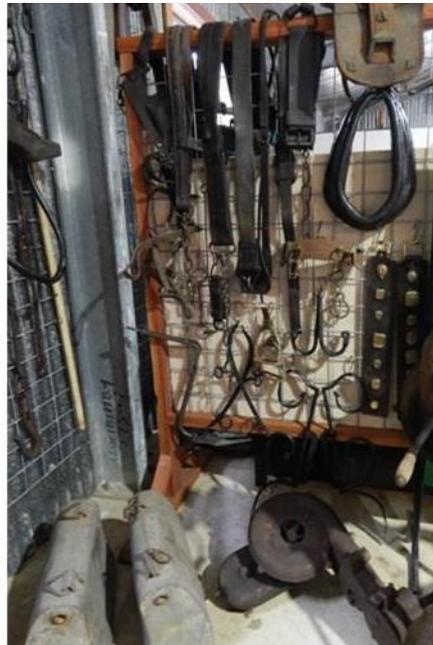
The day also marked **30 years** since the commencement of the Mullumbimby Community Market.

Market stalwart and proprietor of Coffee Oasis, Greg Vail, was invited to cut the commemorative cake. Greg was here for the first market and has been providing quality coffee for market goers over the life of the market.

A glimpse at some of the new displays in the shed:
 Right: Assorted tools used by local carpenters and businesses.



Below: 3 panels in the Transport section – Bullock Yokes & Chains, Horse & Coach Gear and Blacksmith Tools



Old Blood and New Blood alike

Society Members and interested people in our community are invited to attend the Society's AGM on **Tuesday 10th December at 10.30AM at the Mullum Museum.**
 Come along and join the Committee in bringing the past into the future

Frederick Dougan Nixon, a well-pedigreed Brunswick Settler

Germaine Greer in her book *White Beech; The Rainforest Years* (Bloomsbury 2014), devotes some serious attention to **Frank Nixon**, the first white settler at Numinbah, painting an interesting picture of his family background while casting some doubt on his portrayal of events, which may help explain ocker attitudes to his brother **Frederick Dougan Nixon**.

His family was distinguished, on his mother's side as planters and traders in the West Indies and Central America, and on his father's side as members of the British cultural and religious establishment. His parents may have hoped to establish a respected dynasty in the Great South Land....

*Frank Nixon's paternal grandfather, **Robert Nixon**, was an Anglican clergyman and graduate of Christ Church, Oxford... By his wife **Anne Russell**, Robert Nixon had two sons, Frank's father, **George Russell Nixon**, born on 20 March 1802, and **Francis Russell Nixon**, born sixteen months later. In 1810 both boys were sent to merchant Taylors' School in London. George was taken out of school within a year, while Francis stayed eleven years, and went on to graduate from St John's College Oxford in 1827. In 1842 he was made a Doctor of Divinity and consecrated bishop of Tasmania....*

Frank's father George was twenty-eight years old when he entered Trinity College Cambridge as a pensioner in 1830. After he graduated he led a peripatetic existence as tutor to the children of the rich in finishing schools in Italy and Switzerland....

*Frank Nixon's mother was **Rosalie Adelaide Dougan**. At least three generations of Dougans had been traders and planters in the West Indies.... In 1798 **John Dougan**, Rosalie Adelaide's father..., married **Clarissa Squire**, daughter of a Plymouth merchant.... In the West Indies from May 1806 Dougan... was acting as agent for prizes, that is to say, ships cargoes of which were forfeit according to the British interpretation of the rules governing the maritime war with France... and was ruthless in pursuit of personal enrichment.*

*After a 3yr sojourn in Nova Scotia from 1812 The family returned to England..., where **Rosalie Adelaide**, the second-last of the Dougan's twelve children, was born 4Jun1817. In late 1818 Dougan's fortunes changed drastically..., as he fell into debt, but through patronage scored a job as commissioner looking into the plight of indentured labourers (ex-slaves) in the West Indies. In September 1826 he died intestate.... His eight daughters were all unmarried; of his four sons, two had joined the British army in India.*

*On 21 September 1839, in London, twenty-two-year-old **Rosalie Adelaide Dougan** married thirty-seven-year-old **George Russell Nixon**. Their first child, **George Dougan Nixon**, was born in Switzerland in 1840 and died there the same year. **Frank** was born in Rome in 1842. A sister **Angela** was born in Bagni di Lucca in 1843, a brother, **Frederick Dougan**, in Verlungo (1848), another, **George Louis**, in Bristol (1851). Three more siblings were born in Switzerland, **Arthur** in Vevey (1852), and **Anna** (1853) and **Clara** (1855) in Veytaux. Clara died in infancy.*

*Frank was eighteen when his parents decided to send him and his brother Edward to Australia, where Rosalie Adelaide's elder sister **Mary Walkden** had settled. After landing in Jan1860 Frank bought a property (dubbed Avenex) at Brungle in the name of his family and... build a split-slab house.... His father arrived in Oct1860 and Mrs Nixon and the other six children in Jan1862.*

*Seventeen-year-old **Gertrude Nixon** soon attracted the attentions of twenty-five-year-old **Joshua Bray**, who with his brother James was working for his father on the neighbouring Brungle Run. Bray's sister Mary was married to **Samuel William Gray**, who at a Government auction in 1862 bought the lease of 16,000 acres in the Mount Warning caldera, and offered his brother-in-law a partnership. In 1865 Bray proposed to Gertrude and was accepted... and off he went to Kynnumboon on the north arm of the Tweed (now the Rous River).*

*In December 1864, **George Nixon** returned to England to visit his brother, the Bishop, and would not return to Australia until 1868. On*

*19Jul1865 Gertrude wrote to Joshua from Avenex:... If **Fred** went up [to the Tweed] he might see to a little house being put up for Mama and Anna.... When sixteen-year-old **Fred** turned up at Kynnumboon, Bray found him a good worker but 'low-spirited', and permitted himself to observe that 'his Mama scolded him too much'....*



Mrs Gertrude Bray (~1870 above), mother of 14 children.
(Courtesy Tweed Regional Museum)



By the end of 1867... Mrs Nixon and Anna were on the Tweed and Frank, Edward, Arthur and Louis were still at Avenex, while **Frederick** was working on a property outside Armidale. By 17Apr1868 Frank, Louis and Arthur had joined their mother at Kynnumboon, because it was then that they climbed sacred Mount Warning, something that only the most senior Aboriginal elders were allowed to do. Selections had been taken up in the names of various members of the Nixon family... around Kynnumboon.

On his way back from a visit to Kynnumboon Frank married widowed Scotswoman **Catherine Elizabeth Cameron**, 12yrs his senior, on 13May1868 in a Presbyterian Ceremony at Armidale. He took his wife back to Avenex where he and **Fred** continued to make their living as farmers and graziers..., and where Fred had applied for 42 acres at Brungle in Sep1869. Frank was still in the Snowy on 10Feb1870 when he stood witness for Fred, who had attained his majority and was at last free to marry **Charlie Rankin**, the fourth daughter of the late **Archibald Rankin** of Tumut. When Avenex was finally sold, Fred stayed in the district, scoring a 52 acre 'Conditional Purchase' at Wyangle, Tumut, in Nov1873, while Frank and Kate went north to try sugar cane growing.



Kynnumboon Homestead, built by Joshua Bray, 'King of the Tweed'.
(Courtesy Tweed Daily News)

In 1876, at the Crown Land Sales in Beenleigh, we find **Fred Nixon**, giving his occupation as mailman, buying Portion 11, upstream from brother Frank's holdings. (Fred was granted the 120ac Homestead Selection at Numinbah in Jun1876). He was not long from Tumut, where the birth of his fourth child (**Florence**) was registered in 1875. The fifth birth (**Mary Isabella**) was in Queensland on 5Apr1879, but in 1880 he sold up and took over as the proprietor of the Tumbulgum Hotel a few kilometres downstream from Kynnumboon. In the meantime he had been active in Nerang affairs, becoming a steward at the Nerang Races (of which Frank was a judge), getting involved in Logan Electorate politics, becoming captain of the Nerang Cricket Team (of which Frank was a member), and appointed to the Nerang school committee. In 1883, giving his address as Gudgen (Cudgen), Tweed River, Fred went out of business and claimed bankruptcy, which was granted the next year. He would go on to operate rather more successfully as a publican elsewhere in New South Wales, much to the disgust of his family....

Fred appears to be the first licensee of the 'Junction Hotel' at the confluence of the north and south arms of the Tweed River at Tumbulgum. During his short stay he became one of the driving forces in formation of the *Tweed River Racing Club*, a lobbyist for the Brisbane-Tweed railway and a partner in the Tumbulgum Store. On 14Apr1881 Charlie gave birth to son **Frederick Archibald Nixon** at the pub, the lease of which was on the market in Sep1882, at the same time Fred sold out of his partnership in the store.

Shortly afterwards the family probably moved to Cudgen, where daughter **Violet Russell Nixon** was born in 1884 and where Fred was a steward for a *Tweed River Race Meeting* in Mar1884. But on Boxing Day 1884 he was a steward for the *Brunswick Athletic Sports Carnival* (with **T.G. Huff** and **James Mills** as fellow stewards, **Peter Nelson** as judge, **Robert Smith** as secretary and **Robert Marshall**, who had just opened his *Ocean View Hotel*, as treasurer).

It seems Fred had turned up on the Brunswick to take over the management of **John Lund's** butchery, and possibly Lund's Byron Bay store until **George H. Daniel** became the proprietor of the latter around mid 1885. Lund was declared bankrupt at Tintenbar in early 1886, amongst his assets going under the mid year hammer being a newish butcher shop and store on the corner of Mullumbimbi Street and The Terrace at Brunswick Heads, at which time **Fred Nixon** was formally recorded as the lessee. The business was probably off-loaded around late 1889 when Fred superseded **Richard Webber** as licensee of the *Court House Hotel*, opened by **Henry Stone** in Fingal Street mid 1886.

But in between times there was an entertaining episode of playing happy families when Fred took exception to the peremptory manner in which he was treated by **Henry French** and **Constable William Caleb Andrews** in an incident involving a couple of drunken yobbos in 1888 (see BVHS Newsletter No 63 of June 2017). Henry got up a 19-signature petition to have Henry removed as a magistrate, asserting that *Mr French is unpopular and showing vindictiveness so*

glaringly in this instance what might he not do, should he have it in his power on the bench.... He is universally unpopular... and known to be a man who would and has used his power to satisfy his prejudices....

Constable Andrews was in need of assistance with the yobbos when he was advised by Henry to "Call on Nixon, he is making a deal of fun of it".... But Nixon requested the Constable to call on some one more fitted for the work, this the Constable did not do, but requested Mr Nixon in the Queen's name to assist him, which he very reluctantly did.... On 5Mar1888 Mr Nixon reported Constable Andrews conduct to the Inspector of Police, Grafton.... Mr Nixon has recently been carrying on a small butchering business



Anniversary Day Sports Carnival, Corner of Fingal Street and The Terrace, 26Jan1907

on the Brunswick River, but at one time held a Publican's Licence on the Tweed, but on account of his being unable to conduct his house properly, his licence was cancelled, and the Constable has been informed by the Murwillumbah Police, that he otherwise gave them considerable trouble.... With the deposition from ex-Cudgen Constable Andrews, Henry, deemed pioneer royalty, convinced the Colonial Secretary that Fred was the vindictive one.

By 1888, which saw the birth of son **Louis William Nixon**, Fred was active in Community affairs, often acting as chairman of numerous meetings called to get improvements to the place. He was also heavily into cricket. And wife Charles was much in demand as a songstress at various social functions, while his daughters were much sort after at those same social events, one such event being the opening of the School of Arts on Anniversary Day 1892 at which *dancing was sustained till daylight...*, males outnumbering females 3 to 1.

At the Apr1891 census Fred was listed as 'Head of Household No 3', presumably the pub, housing 9 males and 4 females, almost half the number at **Robert Marshall's** pub (15m, 6f). Fred's daughter **Jane Maxwell Nixon** was separately listed as 'Head of Household No 14', housing 1 male and 2 females. She, born 1871 Tumut, had acquired Portion 154, 60 acres just past the southern boundary of the Brunswick Village Reserve, in Jan1889, 5mths before it was '*reserved from sale for railway purposes*'. She was probably dummying for Fred, who was one of the many taking a speculative punt (or had insider knowledge) on the proposed railway route. (Her Portion was also home to 'Dodd's Grass', which spread into **Richard Webber's** adjacent Portion 33, acquired by John See, MLA for Grafton and later Premier, ~1889). On 26May1889 **Jessie Rosalie Nixon** (aka Rosalie Jessie), born 1872 Tumut, selected Portion 125, 53 acres north of the river, most of which later formed 'New Brighton'.

Ms Greer says In August 1894 **Frank Nixon** was appointed clerk of petty sessions and police magistrate to the new boom town of Thargomindah, where his niece, Fred's daughter, twenty-four-year-old (22?) **Rosalie Jessie Nixon**, kept house for him.... Frank died 26Jan1896 and Rosalie came to inform the doctor that her uncle was dead..., then presumably made her way back to the Brunswick, where she married **Donald A.W. Kennedy**, of Kennedy's Lane, Tyagarah, in a Presbyterian ceremony at her parents residence, Brunswick... on 15Mar98, with sister **Mary Isabella** as bridesmaid and brother **Frederick Archibald** as best man. She'd sold her New Brighton selection to her Tyagarah neighbor, lawyer **George Bennett Somerville** of Lismore, by at least 1907.

In the meantime Rosalie was bridesmaid and witness at the marriage of her 18/19yr old Anglican sister **Anna Laura Nixon** to 27yr old mover and shaker **Hugh Campbell** in St Carthage's Catholic Church, Lismore, on 5Jul1892, the ceremony performed by Bishop Jeremiah Doyle. Three years later the Campbells moved to Perth where wedded bliss was short-lived. **Florence Nixon**, born 1875 Tumut, initially became besotted with Bruns school teacher **Charles Bennett**, then married baker **Henry Herbert Collins** of Murbah in 1896 followed by widower **James Alfred Layton** of Byron Bay in 1933. In 1894 23yr old **Jane Maxwell Nixon** married 35yr old **Neil McDonald**, cane farmer of Billinudgel (who was *widely known in Australian rowing circles*), and in 1898 moved to Mt Morgan in Queensland. On 26May1899 **Mary Isabella Nixon** married **Robert King**, grandson of pioneer cedar-getter **Steve King**, taking up dairy farming at 'Seaview' (aka 'Ocean View'), Broken Head, and retiring into the Bay in 1929.

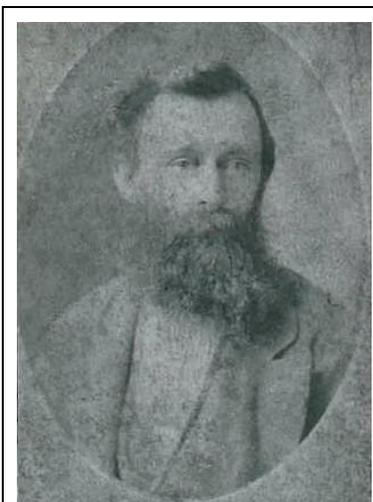
Fred had handed over management of the *Court House Hotel* to **A. Clarke** in 1893 and seems to have become a cane grower, perhaps on daughter Jane's property. Brunswick Heads was on the skids by the late 1890s, the *Ocean View*

Hotel going into mothballs in 1897 and 2yrs later its Court House rival was purchased by **William John Reilly** for re-erection on his block opposite the School of Arts in Mullum, by which time the Nixons had moved into Queensland.

Their last daughter, **Violet Russell Nixon**, born 1884 Cudgen, married **James** ('Genial Jim') **Morrison** on 14Nov1903 at the home of her sister **Mary King** at Broken Head. James was the manager of the *Byron Bay Butchering Company* and prominent in civic affairs, earning a farewell testimonial to Sydney on 7Oct1912 with a big function at the *Great Northern Hotel*.

Jim's sister, 26yr old **Amy Alinda Victoria Morrison**, married 25yr old butcher **Frederick Archibald Nixon** on 20Jun1906 at Mount Morgan, where Fred's parents had taken up residence by at least 1903 and where Fred worked, for a time, in the sulphur part of the goldmines.... However, Fred and Charlie had had their fill of North Queensland by late 1909 and decided to return to their old stamping grounds, initially taking up residence with the Kennedys of Tyagarah and 6mths later applying for the lease of 170 acres of Crown Land in the area now known as Suffolk Park, Broken Head, where they were pioneers in the tea-tree industry. Their dogleg block was on the ocean side of the Tintenbar-Byron Road, across from **Robert King's** 137 acres.

After Fred started to suffer health issues they sold out to **Frederick Lyle Suffolk** of Nimbin around 1918 and retired into Byron Bay. Fred died 27June1921, the *Northern Star* saying *He came to the Tweed River with his wife and family 45 years ago, where his liberality and fair dealing earned for him the respect he deserved* (which sounds like **John Macgregor's** subtle wordage). *Later he moved to the Byron Bay district. His health broke down some three years ago, and he passed away after a painful and lingering illness....* The *Tweed Daily* obituary was word-for-word except for abbreviating the above as *He came to the Tweed River with his wife and family 45years ago, and was the pioneer of the Murwillumbah-Nerang mail coach service....* He was given a Presbyterian send off.



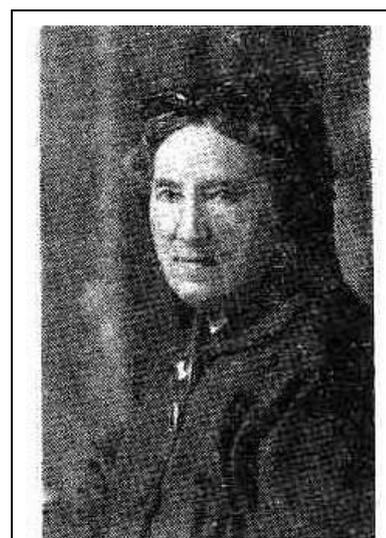
Frederick Dougan Nixon
(Courtesy 'Gorodkin' website)

Florence Collins moved to the Bay sometime after the death of husband Henry in Sydney in 1928 (aged 55), and shared house with mother Charlie. That same year the Kings sold up at Broken Head and moved into town, Charlie sharing house with them up until her death in 1937. In the meantime she was an active member of the *Byron Bay Presbyterian Congregation*, the *Women's Guild and Temperance Union*, and sought after at various functions for her singing talent. She became well-known around town, gaining a write-up in the *Northern Star* of 29Jan1937: *At the age of seven years she came out from Scotland with her family, and was named "Charles" after a favourite uncle....* And now the Rankins have large station properties at Tumut and Wagga Wagga....

There were nine children of the marriage and one died in infancy. The daughters are, Jane, Mrs McDonald (Port Kembla); Rosalie, Mrs Kennedy (Ewingsdale); Anna, the late Mrs Campbell, of Perth, WA; Mary, Mrs King (Byron Bay); Florence, Mrs Layton (Byron Bay); and Violet, Mrs J. Morrison, Sydney; the three sons living are all residing in Queensland, namely, Frederick Archibald, George Charles, and Louis William; William Henry died in infancy....

About 1877 they removed to the Tweed district and there the late **Mr Nixon** was engaged in cedar getting. Although they were not actually the first settlers in this district, they were among the pioneers and there raised cattle, sheep, horses and in addition they grew wheat, which was converted into flour.... From the Tweed, the Nixon family moved to Nerang Creek (Q), and there they selected 320 acres.... Disillusioned with the place which at first gave such promise, the family were glad to remove to the tiny Nerang settlement. There they took up a large holding, "The Oakes".... Eventually they came back to the Tweed and settled at Tumbulgum....

She never made her 90th birthday and died suddenly at the home of her daughter, **Mrs R. Kennedy**, Tyagarah, on 25May1937. Members of the family who survive are... as above. Another daughter, Mrs Campbell, of Perth, died some time ago.... (Divorcee **Anna Laura Campbell** died Perth May1951).



Mrs. C. Nixon, of Byron Bay, a district pioneer, who will celebrate her ninetieth birthday this year.

Said the *Northern Star* of
29Jan1937

Peter Tsicalas

BANGALOW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INVITATION

One of our members has produced a short documentary called *The End of the War* and it concerns his father's life long battle with war related PTSD. The film has been selected in the US based Cutting Edge Film Festival and was a semi-finalist in the Australia Independent Film festival. Here is a link to a recent newspaper report about the film:

<https://www.byronnews.com.au/news/veterans-journey-captured-on-new-documentary/3859432/>

This film comprises Ted Bleakley's photos taken during the war in the Pacific, home movies he took of his family starting in 1949 and more recently, text messages and phone pictures taken during his later years.

A second short film will be shown on the night. This film is a creative and funny use of historical photos to tell an 'alternative' history of the district. It was produced as a way to draw attention to the existence of precious historical photos and to engage a wider audience in viewing this material and indeed to increase interest and patronage to museums.

The film will be shown over two nights, 22nd and 23rd November, and a BBQ dinner is included in the ticket price. All the details are on the attached poster.

The Bangalow Historical Society warmly invites you and your members to attend. This is a fundraiser for us and it gives people the opportunity to enjoy our recent additions and renovations, and new and interesting displays of our collection. I sincerely hope some of your members will be able to attend and perhaps take back some ideas for increasing community engagement in your museum.

Booking early will assist with catering.

Kind regards

Trisha Bleakley

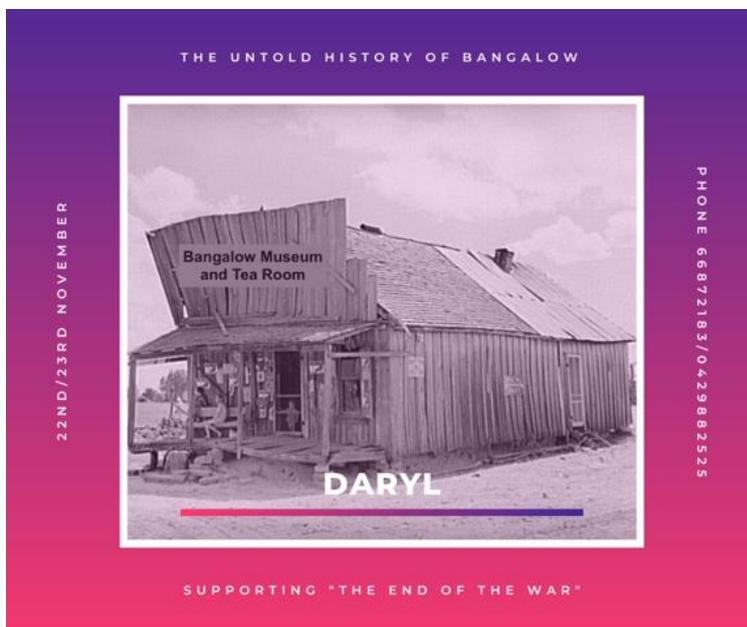
President

Bangalow Heritage House Museum & Cafe

PO Box 34, Bangalow NSW 2479

T: 02 6687 2183

E: bangalowhistorical@bigpond.com



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

This newsletter is written by and for the members of the BVHS Inc

Cnr Myokum & Stuart Sts
Mullumbimby
P.O. Box 378 Mullumbimby 2482
02 6684 4367

bvhs84@yahoo.com.au

www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/MullumbimbyMuseum

Patrons: Frank Mills OAM

Basil Cameron

President: Stephen Hall

Vice President: Robby Wright

Min .Secretary: Brenda Davis

Cor. Secretary: Susan Tsicalas

Treasurer: Susan Tsicalas

Assistant Treasurer:

Sarah Newsome

Committee Members:

John Davis

Shed Manager Roland Sjoberg

Market Manager:

Sarah Newsome

Heritage Panel Representative

Chris Cooney

Newsletter team:

John Davis & Work

Experience participants

Public Officer: Susan Tsicalas

Shed Project Manager: Dave

Sharonowitz.

All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter

*Please leave contributions for the newsletter with John, Tues or Fri 9am to 12 noon.

Alternatively email to:

bvhs84@yahoo.com.au

NEXT MEETING

AGM Tuesday 10 Dec 2019 10.30am

*Deadline for agenda items
Friday 6 Dec 2019

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesdays & Fridays

10am - 12pm

Market Saturdays 9am - 1pm

BVHS Newsletter is produced by BVHS Inc and NORTEC Work Experience Participants



Laugh Until You Cry
a night at the movies in
Bangalow

**THE END OF
THE WAR**



SEMI-FINALIST
**Australia
Independent
Film Festival**
2019

a film by Terry Bleakley

a fundraiser for Bangalow Historical Society

**22ND/23RD NOV 2019 HERITAGE HOUSE BANGALOW
5.30PM TO 9.30PM BBQ DINNER AND DESSERT
DRINK ON ARRIVAL \$30 PER HEAD**

Drinks for sale

Bookings: 0266872183 or 0429882525
bangalowhistorical@bigpond.com

Also showing: "Daryl's History of Bangalow" and brief Q
and A with Director Terry Bleakley