

BFA Reunion, Toowoomba 2023

Programme Overview 6th to 8th October 2023

First, a big welcome to members of Clan Blinco/Blencowe. Recognising that our family name has such a wide variety of spellings, this includes everyone with a family name that differs in some form or another.

This package has been prepared to provide you with information relating to the reunion to take place in October 2023 under the auspices of the [Blencowe Family Association](#). BFA reunions take place somewhere in the world every two or three years. With a two year delay due to COVID, the last reunion was organised by Ed and Kathy Blincoe at [Niagara Falls](#) in the United States in 2018. This time around, the latest reunion is to take place at Toowoomba, the heart of the Blinco of Hedgerley Clan. The timing was selected to coincide with the Blinco Reunion in October 1981 that took place at Crows Nest in Queensland. Details of the reunion are available at:

- The BFA website: <http://www.blencowefamilies.com/reunion/2023/BFAinvitation2023reunion.html>
- The 2023 reunion Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/bfa.2023>

Links to the forms and helpful information along with programme updates will be posted at both sites. Any questions can be posted either via the Facebook page or by emailing the organising committee at: bfa-toowoomba-2021@tpg.com.au.

The reunion has been planned to provide as much flexibility as possible during the uncertainty we all face due to the COVID pandemic. We have secured the support of a range of providers and ask that you support them with patience and understanding as they must manage COVID-related issues to keep us all safe. We would like to acknowledge our supporters:

- the [Burke & Wills Hotel](#) which will be our home base during the event
- the [Highfields Pioneer Village](#) operated by our hosts Pat Blinco (cousin) and Ray Ashford for Saturday 7th October
- [Coast to Coast the Golden Roast](#) who will be providing evening catering on Saturday 7th October
- the [Cube Hotel](#) which will be our lunch venue on Sunday 8th October.
- Discovery Bus Tours who will operate a tour bus on Sunday 8th October.
- Walking tours by [Toowoomba Trails](#) on Sunday 8th October.
- Walking tours by [Walking Tours Toowoomba](#) on Sunday 8th October.

To help our organising committee with arrangements, we ask you complete and return the attached registration form. To help us manage numbers and you to manage your costs for the event, we have prepared a cost calculator. Please return this with your registration form. Some of the activities of the reunion are to be booked directly with the above providers as indicated on the cost calculator. Most costs will be payable on the day but some need to be pre-paid (also indicated on the cost calculator). **To assist the organising committee in securing bookings, we require pre-payment of the registration fee and several costs by the 8th September 2023.**

Pre-payment should be made either by direct bank transfer to **Robert Wallis, BSB 066110, Account Number 10247261**, or cheque/money order made payable to Mr Robert Wallis. Please advise name & transfer details by email to bfa-toowoomba-2021@tpg.com.au. Payment by cash on the day is possible but should be agreed with the organisers in advance.

We look forward to hearing from you and meeting you at the reunion.

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Activities planned for Saturday 7th October 2023

It is intended to gather and have breakfast together at Zack's Restaurant at the Burke & Wills Hotel, or at your choice of venue elsewhere. If you choose to join us for breakfast at the B&W, please make a booking to help them manage the catering. See <https://burkeandwillshotel.com.au/a-la-carte-breakfast/> for more details.

The Saturday programme is focussed on spending time together at the [Highfields Pioneer Village](#), home of the big cow that is operated by Ray Ashford & Pat Blinco. Ray and Pat established the museum in 2000 based on a large collection they built over the previous 20-30 years. Since then, it has grown to become a large and comprehensive museum of all the things that reflect the pioneering spirit of our ancestors of the Darling Downs and beyond. We have arranged with Pat and Ray a range of activities intended to cater for different interests and accessibility.

The day is structured to allow plenty of time in the morning to gather over breakfast and take a leisurely 25-minute (16km) drive to the Highfields Pioneer Village. The programme for the day is as follows:

- 9:30 am attendees travel to the Highfields Pioneer Village
- 10:00 to 11:00 am welcome to the village and check-in at the front gate. Morning tea available.
- 11:00 am to 5:30 pm village activities: <http://www.highfieldspioneervillage.com.au/attractions>
- 12:00 pm lunch (sausage sizzle)
- 2:00 pm BFA meeting in the hall
- 3:00 pm afternoon tea (reunion group photo opportunity)
- 5:30 to 6:30 pm gather at the undercover dining area for pre-dinner drinks
- 6:30 to 9:30 dinner (10:00pm close)

Please refer to the cost calculator for details on costs associated with the day and the dinner. Pat & Ray will be supported by an army of volunteers, so please be patient and support them throughout the day. If you would like to stay at the Village, they have two sites where power can be supplied at \$30 each, or unpowered cost is \$25.00 for caravans. Showers and toilets are available.

Tea/coffee and damper will be available throughout the day. Options for gluten free will be available. The sausage sizzle for lunch is a simple affair. If you require something different, please bring it with you.

Pat and Ray are working on a selection of unique exhibits for our stay. We will keep you posted via the [Facebook](#) page on how this develops. We will have a range of displays in the village hall including memorabilia including displays from the 1981 Blinco Reunion at Crows Nest and Alfred Blinco's miniature steam engine. We will have space for other family memorabilia you are willing to display. We will have printouts of family trees and welcome any updates or corrections you may wish to share. We will also have an opportunity to share digital copies of the trees and a range of historic photos. Please contact us if you have digital images, you are willing to share.

At 2:00pm, we are planning on a general gathering of the clan at the village hall. This gathering is a regular feature of all BFA reunions and allows us to discuss things that are relevant to the family. We have some items for the meeting but would welcome any other things you would like to bring up. We are also planning on including our cousins who are unable to make the event in person using a group chat facility. Details on how to link up will be made available closer to the time on the events [Facebook](#) page. It will be simple to join and we encourage those who will not be present, to gather wherever you are to share some time together.

For the evening dinner, a cool room will be made available for you to store your own alcoholic beverages. Non-alcoholic drinks will be available for purchase. We are finalising the details of the dinner that will be based on a spit roast. We are discussing with our providers alternatives for those with specific dietary requirements which they have indicated they can cater for. Please add any details on the registration form to assist us with this planning.

BFA Reunion, Toowoomba 2023

Activities planned for Sunday 8th October 2023

The morning starts the way you want it to. It is intended to gather and have breakfast together at [Zack's Restaurant](#) at the [Burke & Wills Hotel](#), or at your choice of venue elsewhere.

The Sunday programme is focussed on spending time together in Toowoomba. We have arranged with local providers activities intended to cater for different interests, price point and accessibility. The activities are:

- A 1 ½ hour bus tour visiting Blinco family locations of interest around Toowoomba.
- Walking tours of 1 ½ hours duration with two tour operators.
- Morning and/or afternoon tea at the [Cobb & Co. Museum](#).
- A walk through the [Queens Park and Botanic Gardens](#).
- Lunch at the [Cube Hotel](#) (once managed by John Walton Blinco from 1897 to 1899).

The programme for the day runs from 10:00am to 3:30pm. The programme has been arranged to allow anyone wanting to participate but head off in the afternoon. Allowance has been made for those wishing to attend a Church service in the morning or start with a walk through the [Queens Park and Botanic Gardens](#).

During the day, tours start and stop at various locations to allow you to continue from one activity to another. All activities take a break in the middle of the day for everyone to gather for lunch at the [Cube Hotel](#) on the corner of Margaret and Neil streets. We have arranged for a group booking for lunch between 12:00 and 2:00pm. The Cube Hotel has a diverse menu and can cater for all dietary requirements. All-day and lunchtime menus are available at: <http://www.cubehotel.com.au/menus>.

Numbers per tour are limited and minimum numbers apply. If a tour becomes fully booked, alternatives are available depending on how you want to structure your day. Costs for various activities are listed on the cost calculator included with the registration form. Provisional details on the tours include:

Morning Walk 1 (by Sue McPherson Tours) starts at the Burke & Wills Hotel at 10.00am and finishing at the Cube Hotel at 11:30am. The tour will progress to the Toowoomba Railway Station then via Russell Street to Queens Park and Eleanor Street, learning about the historic buildings and history of Toowoomba. The tour will progress to ANZAC Memorial Park and then along Margaret Street into Neil Street, passing local churches, the Town Hall, Indigenous Park and to the Cube Hotel.

Morning Walk 2 (by Toowoomba Trails) starts at the Burke and Wills hotel at 10.15am and finishing at the Cube Hotel at 11:45am. This walk will centre on the architecture and street art of the CBD. Toowoomba is a fascinating architecturally diverse city, with world renowned buildings as well as unique design features found nowhere else. This walk will introduce participants to the unique characteristics of Toowoomba's built environment. Part of this is its laneways a relic of the Victorian era. These laneways provide a gritty urban canvas for some of the country's best street artists. This walk will identify a range of magnificent art works and familiarise participants with both the artist and the pieces' intended meaning.

Afternoon Walk 3 (by Sue McPherson Tours) starts at the Cube Hotel at 2:00pm and finishing at Toowoomba Railway Station at 3:30pm. The tour will progress to Indigenous Park, the Town Hall, passing local churches and then along Neil Street into Margaret Street, and onto ANZAC Memorial Park. The tour will progress via Eleanor Street to Queens Park learning about the historic buildings and history of Toowoomba and finish at the Toowoomba Railway Station.

Afternoon Walk 4 (by Toowoomba Trails) starts at the Cube Hotel at 2:15pm and finishing back at the Burke & Wills Hotel at 3.45pm. The focus of this guided walk will be Toowoomba's Dark side. Participants will learn of Toowoomba's nasty and at times brutal past (including the not so recent past). But from bad often comes good

and participants will learn of the positives that have come from Toowoomba's dark side - from the convict who became a federal parliamentarian, to the abolition of the death penalty in Queensland and so much more.

Please be aware that the walking tours require a reasonable level of fitness, and of course, a hat, sunscreen, water and in case of wet weather, an umbrella.

The Blinco tour bus will run twice during the day along the same route. The morning tour will leave the Burke & Wills Hotel at 10:00am and pass by the Cobb & Co. Museum to pick up morning walkers. This tour will arrive at the Cube Hotel at 11:30am. The afternoon tour will leave the Cube Hotel at 2:00pm and finish at the Burke & Wills Hotel at 3:30pm. The details of the tour are expected to include historical accounts of locations relating to Alfred Blinco's life in Toowoomba such as:

- the Blinco grave complex at Drayton Cemetery, resting place of Alfred Blinco and several immediate family members
- the former site of Alfred Blinco's house "Brompton Farm" at Wilsonton on the corner of Bridge and McDougall streets and the setting of a newsworthy altercation between Marian and one William Wallace
- current and former locations of three houses built by Alfred in the Newtown area
- the former site of Toowoomba Gaol where Alfred spent six months in 1867.

Please keep an eye out for event updates on the reunion [Facebook](#) page.