

The Cowey (Cowie) family reunites

Long, happy lives

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Perhaps in times when it took hours to go 10 miles, families rarely saw each other. They just grew apart. If there was a family feud, no one now living knows about it.

The journey they have taken to be reunited is a long and winding one and started when Neil's brother Nigel died suddenly in 2005.

Nigel was into genealogy. Amongst his papers were his dad's war records and a Cowey family tree.

Neil Coewy took up the study. Using the Internet, he found Alex Broomfield. Alex mentioned his fourth cousin, Nancy Gibson, a direct descendant of Mary. She and Francis Cowie are cousins on

both sides of their families.

Neil and Nancy met in September 2007, bringing Neil one step closer to the Cowies.

Nancy had known cousin Francis for years. They now had links to three of the original five siblings — Mary, John and James. All that was missing was the link to Robert and his homesteading family out west.

Back into the picture comes the helpful cousin Alex Broomfield.

He mentioned he had found Cowie Farms out west. Donna Grey and her husband own a farm there. She is a direct descendant of Robert and a tie to the last link.

From there, it was a short step to having a reunion.

The Greys are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this



BOB OWEN / SUN MEDIA

A church full of Coweys and Cowies. They were all together on July 20 — more than 100 of them from as far away as Cardiff, Sask. and the southern USA for the first-ever Cowie/Cowey reunion. There have been so many descendants of John and Jane Cowey that the tree ran 40 feet around the Eden Church hall in Dundonald.



The Cowie homestead 1991, a going concern just west of Dundonald.

year and were coming east in July to hunt down some of her relatives. It seemed like the perfect time

A brief discussion in the car hatched the idea and they started collecting addresses of the living descendants. Neil figures they have identified 99 per cent of the 596 offspring in nine generations, mostly stretching across Canada. A few have found their way to Australia.

Many of them are familiar to this area — Kernaghan, Arkles, Peebles, Haines, Day, Jones, Waller ...

The cousins have sent out 125

invitations for the pot luck dinner at 12:45 p.m. July 20 at Eden United Church in Dundonald. Nancy hopes to see at least 100 relatives for the afternoon of fun and renewal of ties. Anyone who thinks they may be related can contact Nancy Gibson at cowey.reunion@hotmail.com.

A mystery solved

Reunions usually unravel mysteries. Meeting with Francis Cowie solved some for Neil Cowey.

Neil had copies of some of the family documents. When he met

Francis, he asked about them.

Cousin Francis reached back and pulled out the original deeds to the farm.

Neil knew that Mark Cowey, with no children of his own, passed his watch on to his niece Margaret. Francis pulled it out and showed it to his cousin.

Margaret was left out of the will except for a framed picture. On one of Neil's visits to the Cowie farm, Francis said he had a picture which might interest Neil — the one given to Margaret.

They now have photos of four of the original five children. Only James is missing.