

Snapshot of the  
Clotworthy Family Reunion

07/08 February 2009, Whangarei, NZ  
Celebrating 150 years in New Zealand

Discussions began four years ago on commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival in New Zealand of Nathaniel & Amelia Clotworthy.

What sparked the interest was the Child Family Reunion held in Whangarei at 2005 at which descendants of George & William Clotworthy were present.

However it was not until 2008 that a working committee was firmly established charged with the duty of creating the Clotworthy Family Reunion to be held in February 2009, in Whangarei. That committee comprised Cherry Daly as Chairperson, Gwen Daly, Jean Goodison, Noel Griffin, Allan Bowmar, Maire & Alan Monson, Neville & Shennet Clotworthy, Barry Clotworthy, Brian Clotworthy, Carole Corbett & Jolene Bosanquet. Jean Goodison has been on the committees of the three family reunions 1959, 1982 and now 2009. Whilst it was hoped that there would be representatives from all branches, the reality was who was available. Each committee member was allocated a branch with whom to liaise.

Meetings were held on a monthly basis with more frequency in December and January to finalise the event. Thanks to the Griffin/Daly family and Neville & Shennet for hosting the meetings and to all those on the committee who carried out their allocated tasks.

For those reading this who may not have attended the Reunion, it's important for you to know why the family were getting together in 2009.

150 years ago in 1859, Nathaniel & Amelia Clotworthy left Antrim, Northern Ireland, to begin a new life in New Zealand. Nathaniel sailed on the "Shooting Star". Amelia departed a month later on the "Shalimar" with young son George and the infant William.

Nathaniel purchased 409 acres at Whareora, Whangarei. They built their homestead on the site of the Abbey Caves and had 13 children. "Abbey Caves Farm" with beautiful grounds, an orchard and of course the amazing caves, was described as a most hospitable home.

The purpose of this "snap shot" is to share the happenings of the Family Reunion held in February 2009. For further information on the family please refer to the book "The History & Times of the Clotworthy Family" of which many family members have a copy.

Fast forward to 2009 and the gathering of 211 descendants of Nathaniel & Amelia's gathering to celebrate our common ancestors and what a wonderful occasion it was. There were representatives from 9 of the 13 branches. George, William, Thomas, Eleanor(Ellen), Nathaniel (Tanny), Eliza, Alice, Emily, & Charles

*(Note no living issue present from Catherine(Kate), Sarah, John(Jack), Edith, Gilbert & Louis).*

Whilst most of the family members who attended the Reunion came from Northland, and quite a few from other parts of New Zealand, there were a number from overseas. These included Rena & Isobel -descendants from Samuel Clotworthy, from Glasgow, Scotland.

Attending from Australia were Kathleen Kerr – a descendant of Nathaniel's sister Margaret, Greg Clotworthy from Perth – great grandson of George, and a large contingent of Smiths from Emily Branch.

Forum North, Whangarei's convention centre, was chosen as the main venue for the Family Reunion. With registrations slow to come in, naturally there was concern as to the size of the venue. But all fears were laid aside as in December numbers swelled to beyond expectation and judging by the feedback Forum North was a fitting stage.

The Reunion for some began on the Friday which was Waitangi Day, a public holiday. The main focus on Friday was to set up the Display Room, and dining tables. There were precious moments, anxious moments and outright funny moments. To Cherry Daly, your vision of having this display area and pictorial family tree was a wonderful idea. To those of you who brought your treasured artifacts and photos, thank you. We wouldn't have had a Display room if you hadn't contributed. Thanks to Alan Bowmar especially for manning the photocopier and laminator and putting up displays all day and to Cherry for creating the individual pictorial family trees when required.

The virtue of the day was 'Patience'. The setting up of the tables proved a challenge as the tables were longer than usual, thus the table cloths of normal size were too short! This meant suddenly we needed extra table cloths. It was a sight to behold with all hands to the pump at 5.45pm to set the tables before the security man came back to lock up, especially as we needed more cutlery and crockery than the caterers had delivered and every nook and cranny of the kitchen areas were scoured. There was a sigh of relief when all completed, with freshly picked flowers gracing the tables, and ready for SAT morning. But what time did Cherry finally turn off the laminator after asking the security man if she could stay later?

Saturday morning 8.30am, busy bees everywhere. In the Display Room, at the Registration Desk and Book Sales area, putting up last minute signs, making sure the powerpoint projector was working, setting up the Tender Desk and not forgetting getting past the security man and finding a carpark etc etc.

The Registration Desk was manned by Jason Clotworthy, Luana Bosanquet-Heays and Jolene Bosanquet. Individual name badges with which Branch you were from in big writing complete with Clotworthy Crest proved invaluable to those of us with any memory losses and acted as introductions to those who had not met previously.

A pack was handed out comprising a programme, Information sheet on family sites, history of the Abbey Caves and a map. It was wonderful to finally put faces to the names and to renew contact with more familiar family members. One funny moment was when one the family presented himself at the Registration Desk to collect his name badge and information pack and when asked what his name was, replied Clotworthy.

Hello...how many Clotworthy's did we have present! Of course we shouldve asked "what is your first name".

Across from the Registration Desk, Neville Clotworthy and Alan Monson sold copies of the book -*The History & Times of the Clotworthy Family*, which their wives have produced. A wonderful momento with family information. Particularly useful for those going to England and Northern Antrim.

And then it was time to begin, a tad late but no problem.

MC for the day was Hugh Clotworthy, whose sense of dignity, humour and ability to change tack when required was truly amazing. He can give up his day job anytime! Special mention was made of those who had travelled from afar to be with us such as Rena Clotworthy-Hamilton and her daughter Isobel Colliar from Scotland, the Smiths (part of Emily's branch) from Australia and Kathleen Kerr from the Kerr branch who settled in OZ.

Its so special for the family to have its own celebrant and the Rev Sue Reid always comes up with the right words for the right occasion.

The Official opening of the Family Reunion was made by the elder daughter of the eldest daughter of the eldest son, Gwen Daly. A beautiful speech, filled with wisdom and love and delivered with so much grace, it caused many a tear to be shed.

We wouldn't have been gathered on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009 had it not been for Cherry Daly's foresight and perserverance and the work of the organising committee. Cherry welcomed everyone on behalf of the organising committee.

Robyn Pearce , delivered the special messages & apologies. We had a glimpse of Robyn in her professional capacity as a motivational speaker and author as she read the letters with such sincerity and dignity.

The first was from Sir John Clotworthy, who is recognised as the Head of the Clotworthy Clan worldwide. Sir John would have very much liked to attend our Reunion but it was not possible due to other commitments in February. However he did issue an invitation for Clotworthy's worldwide to gather at Antrim in the not too distant future.

William (Bill) Clotworthy, noted Author/Historian from the USA sent his best wishes, as did others from overseas & from within New Zealand who were unable to attend.

In the message from John Carter MP for Northland, he mentioned about his own family reunion being held in 2009 and highlighted the challenges facing the pioneers in 1859.

Its all very well to gather, give speeches and celebrate, but its very important to give an overview of the family, where they have come from, where they lived etc, as one should not assume that all family members are aware of their roots.

Maire Monson & Shennet Clotworthy produced an excellent book entitled "The History & Times of the Clotworthy Family" and it was by way of introducing this book that our history lesson unfolded.

We were indeed fortunate to have with us, having travelled all the way from Scotland through snow and blizzard literally , Isobel Colliar, who with her mother, Rena Clotworthy-Hamilton are serious genealogists. Isobel told us of the story of the Clotworthy's, of their time in England noted back to the Domesday book (600 yrs ) and Antrim, Northern Ireland (250 yrs) before Nathaniel chose to settle in NZ. Did you know we are related to the author Lewis Carroll and the Duke of Wellington, not to mention Clotworthy's having held important positions in both Northern Ireland and England?

A powerpoint presentation focusing on Nathaniel & Amelia's life in Antrim, some of the family homes both in Antrim and New Zealand and finishing with the sons & daughters of Nathaniel & Amelia, was given by Jolene Bosanquet. Those present were able to see the similarities between the countryside in Antrim and that of Northland, and why our family felt "at home" at Whareora.

During the history lesson Jason Clotworthy had organised a quiz for the kids based on family history, which kept them occupied and listening during the presentations. A prize was presented later at the BBQ. Jason is definitely on the organising committee for 2034!

The organising committee purposely wanted to keep the Registration fee to a minimum and this was achieved by the generosity of those who donated cash and kind to the Reunion coffers. *There is a list of donations in the archives.*

It was decided to hold a “tender” of the items donated.

These items were artwork ( a galloping horse) by international artist Lorene Taurerewa(nee Clotworthy); an antique doll dressed in irish lace & linen made by Isobel Colliar: and a holiday in Rarotonga courtesy of Peter Heays & Jolene Bosanquet. Funds raised from these tenders amounted to \$2950 thereby ensuring all costs for the Reunion were covered.

Those who wished to bid on one or more of the items wrote their amount on a form and deposited it in the relevant box. Those successful in the individual tenders were notified at the evening function.

The mornings events were followed by a delicious buffet luncheon.

Champagne accompanied the cutting of the cake. The cake was made by Gwen Daly. From Nathaniel (Tanny’s) branch, Sadie Bond & Mollie Elliot, who are grand-daughters of Nathaniel & Amelia, cut the cake.

Toasts were made to our ancestors, those no longer with us and those who were unable to attend the Reunion.

We also celebrated Jean Goodison’s 88<sup>th</sup> birthday.

During the afternoon the official photos were taken, a process that takes time gathering members of specific branches and herding everyone into a one-off Clotworthy Family photo. A CD of official, candid and historical photos was produced by Noel & Barbara Herman and are for sale.

The afternoon was the time to view all the wonderful Displays, reminisce on times past and generally catch up with family members.

It was a perfect evening for the outdoor BBQ at Forum North which was hosted by the Griffin/Daly Family. Lamb & pork on the spit, salads and dessert with BYO refreshments. The surrounding rock walls and seating with mature trees forming a canopy made for a delightful setting.

Harold Clotworthy announced the successful tenders. Donna Clotworthy received the painting; Carole Clotworthy the doll and Hugh Clotworthy the holiday. The winner of the quiz was Darcy Goodison.

Not a late night but a very enjoyable one.

Sunday morning 8am the advance party of Neville & Shennet Clotworthy and Roger & Isobel Clotworthy arriving at Little Earth, the eco-lodge adjacent to the site of the homestead at “Abbey Caves Farm” Whareora. Permission had been given by the owners John and Junko to take down the taranaki fence and provide access by 4 wheel drive vehicle from the road directly to the “farm” for those who were unable to walk the track to the homestead site.

This gesture enabled many who otherwise wouldn't have been able to attend to be part of this wonderful day. A photo of the original homestead, the history book and other relevant literature were presented to John & Junko in appreciation of their kindness. Several family members stayed at the Eco-lodge and reported that SAT night about 11pm with a full moon was truly beautiful sitting at the homestead site in silent contemplation.

Family members were asked to gather at the homestead site by 10am. Arrangements had been made with the Frontier of Legionaires to co-ordinate the parking and provide security for the day up on the roadside which worked well.

Roger Clotworthy was the MC for the day and it was all excitement as he announced the arrival of the family – Nathaniel, Amelia, George and baby William on horseback. The family were represented by Hugh Clotworthy, Robyn Clotworthy, Harrison Clotworthy (6yrsold) and Zara Gordon (4mths old) all dressed in period costume. Robyn was riding side saddle. It was a very emotional experience and thanks to Shennett & Neville and their family for arranging this very very special event.

Whilst there was no script on arrival Nathaniel made a profound statement: "Amelia, you go build the house, I'm off to the pub". No women's lib in those days! Not quite what we would expect Nathaniel to actually say but was well received nevertheless.

Thanks were extended to the surrounding farmers who provided access, vehicles and slashed the grass where we were to gather.

We then walked down the hill to the area where Barry Clotworthy had prepared a fenced area with the commemoration plaque. Rev Sue Reid blessed the area and the occasion. She was assisted by Harold Clotworthy. The unveiling of the plaque was carried out by Jean Goodison and Steve Clotworthy. Then followed the planting of the two kauri trees by the children.

After the formalities families adjourned to shady spots for their picnics and the adventurous were treated to guided tours of the Caves by Willie, Nancy & Grant Bowmar. Tom Daly also assisted. A total of 89 people went through the Caves.

Some family members went off visiting the sites as listed on the Information Sheet, such as the graveyard at Whareora and homes where family have resided. Special thanks to Leonie Batt at Kiripaka for allowing a visit from those who have lived in that particular house.

And all too soon it was all over. Everyone scattered back to their homes and their 2009 lives , but with a lasting memory of times past and appreciation of our pioneering ancestors and the hardships they endured.

The Organising Committee had one more meeting to finalise the accounts and hold a debriefing. Minutes of that meeting with suggestions from those present and others who emailed in will be in the “Next Reunion” folder for consideration when the future Organising Committee will be planning the 175<sup>th</sup> Reunion in 2034.

It was suggested that as a family we gather once every five years and have a picnic at the “Abbey Caves Farm” with individual branches visiting the caves whenever they want to as the property belongs to the Council and is public property. The Bowmars are happy to guide anyone through the caves.

Media coverage was in the Northern Advocate and Northern News.

There are copies of the CD’s of the photos still available - \$18.

A DVD will be available. Also \$18

Copies of the History & Times of the Clotworthy Family also available - \$20

Copies of the programme & newsletters available if you want extra copies.

Please order via the email: [clotworthynz@igrin.co.nz](mailto:clotworthynz@igrin.co.nz)

The website will be kept alive and will be expanded on as needs be.

[www.clotworthyfamily.co.nz](http://www.clotworthyfamily.co.nz). Take a look at it from time to time for any notices or new information.

And last but not least, thanks to everyone who made the effort to attend the Family Reunion. Without you it wouldn’t have been.

And to those who couldn’t make it this time, pencil in 2014 for a picnic, a trip to Antrim maybe May 2015 or sooner and the 175<sup>th</sup> Reunion in 2034.

Bon Temps Viandra  
*(good weather/times will come)*