



BRITISH ISLES FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY OF GREATER OTTAWA (BIFHSGO)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: Saturday, June 14, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM EST

Location: Hybrid meeting (in-person and online)

Chair: Dianne Brydon, President

Attendees: 118 (50 in person, 68 online)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM

President Dianne Brydon called the meeting to order and confirmed that a quorum was established. She welcomed all attendees both in-person and online, and acknowledged the presence of Hall of Fame inductees.

Instructions for Online Participants: Questions could be submitted through the "questions" participant in the online platform.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented

Moved by: Nancy Higgins

Seconded by: John Reid

Result: CARRIED unanimously (in-person and online)

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the 2024 AGM, held on 8 June 2024 were posted in advance on the BIFHSGO website.

Motion: To approve the minutes as presented

Moved by: Laurie Dougherty

Seconded by: Duncan Monkhouse

Result: CARRIED unanimously

4. PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Director's reports were posted to the BIFHSGO website earlier. President Dianne Brydon highlighted key achievements from the 30th anniversary year:

Recognition and Awards

- **National Genealogical Society (US) Recognition:** BIFHSGO received an Award of Merit in recognition of its outstanding work in connecting, educating, sharing, and inspiring people in genealogy research, particularly focused on British Isles ancestry.

30th Anniversary Celebrations

- Highlighted milestones from 30 years of history
- Reprinted and recorded excellent talks from the past for video archives
- Held volunteer recognition tea for 64 volunteers, many serving over two decades
- Showcased remarkable research projects over the past 3 decades, through Research Director Sue Lambeth's presentation

Programming

- Delivered varied programming covering British ancestry topics
- All videos of presentations available through members' area of website
- Technical support provided by David Jeanes, Marianne Rasmus, Barb Tose, Ken McKinlay, and Andy Desjardins

Board and Volunteer Recognition

The President recognized the following board members and their achievements:

- **Nancy Higgins** (Program Director): Delivered spring activities and built next year's program
- **Sue Lambeth** (Research Director): Oversaw completion of transcription projects and initiated new ones
- **Patricia Grainger** (Outreach Director): Developed student award parameters and organizational membership criteria; represented BIFHSGO on Ottawa Irish Communities Association
- **Laurie Dougherty** (Secretary): Refined Hall of Fame nomination process
- **Caroline Smallman** (Treasurer): Implemented auto-deposit systems, cost reductions, and GIC investments
- **Duncan Monkhouse** (Past President): Managed member communications
- **Sheila Dohoo Faure** (Web Manager): Created website advisory committee and structural improvements

Conference Success

- 2024 Annual Conference: 220 attendees (145 BIFHSGO members)
- Profit: \$5,694
- Co-chairs: Mary-Lou Simac and Marianne Rasmus
- 2025 Conference planning underway with Brian LeConte and Duncan Monkhouse as co-chairs

Special Interest Group leadership

- British North America SIG (Marianne Rasmus)
- DNA SIG (Susan Courage)

- London SIG (Maureen Amey)
- Writing Group (Carol Annett)

Publications

- Anglo-Celtic Roots: Barbara Tose retired as managing editor in December; Paul Cripwell was welcomed as new editor

Board Transitions

Departing Directors:

- Patricia Grainger (4 years service)
- Nancy Higgins (6 months service)
- Marnie McCall (6 months service)
- Susan Smart (2.5 years service - departed earlier in year)

Continuing Directors:

- Sue Lambeth (Research Director, second term)
- Laurie Dougherty (Director at Large, second term)
- Anne Coulter (mid-term of second term)
- Caroline Smallman (mid-term of first term)
- Duncan Monkhouse (Past President)

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Caroline Smallman presented the financial results for fiscal year 2024:

Revenue Summary

- **Total Revenue:** \$31,500 (decrease from 2023 due to no specialty workshops)
- **Membership Fees:** \$18,300 (similar to previous year)
- **Conference Profit:** \$5,700 (revenues \$9,800 less expenses \$4,100)

Expenses Summary

- **Total Expenses:** \$34,400 (similar to 2023 with different mix of items)
- **Increases:** Promotion, research, storage rentals
- **Decreases:** No specialty workshop expenses

Financial Position

- **Net Loss:** \$2,900 (increase of \$2,000 from previous year)
- **Net Assets:** Decreased by \$3,000 from 2023

External Review

Financial statements reviewed by McKay Duff public accountants. Review concluded that nothing came to their attention suggesting financial statements do not present fairly, the organization's financial position.

6. MOTION TO DISPENSE WITH PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

Caroline Smallman presented a proposal to dispense with the public accountant for fiscal year 2025.

Rationale

- 2024 cost: Over \$5,000 (after treasurer took on charity return filing, saving \$750)
- Represents more than 1/6 of total revenue and 29% of membership revenue
- Under Not-for-Profit Act, organizations with less than \$1 million revenue not required to have external review

Alternative Approach Proposed

- Establish internal review committee of BIFHSGO members
- Treasurer to prepare financial reports and provide committee with access to books and records
- Committee review before board approval and AGM presentation
- Annual unanimous approval required from membership to dispense with public accountant.

Discussion

- Clarification confirmed that motion applies to one year only
- Support expressed from members with charitable bookkeeping experience
- Noted that financial statements filed with Canada Revenue Agency are publicly available

Motion: Motion for unanimous approval of all members present to dispense with the appointment of a Public Accountant for the 2025 fiscal year.

Result: CARRIED unanimously (in-person and online)

7. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Past President Duncan Monkhouse presented the nominations report.

Board Composition

- Bylaws provide for 9-11 board members

- Five vacant positions to fill: Program, Communications, Outreach, Secretary, Director at Large

Acclaimed Candidates

- **Laurie Dougherty:** Director at Large (second term)
- **Paul Cripwell:** Director at Large (new)
- **Margie Kolesar:** Secretary (new)
- **Kathryn Potter:** Director at Large (new)

Continuing Vacancies

Three positions remain unfilled:

- Program Director
- Communications Director
- Outreach Director

Call for Nominations from Floor

No additional nominations received from floor or online participants.

Motion: To acclaim the nominated candidates

Result: CARRIED

2025-2026 Board Composition

- **President:** Dianne Brydon (final year of two-term limit)
- **Past President:** Duncan Monkhouse
- **Treasurer:** Caroline Smallman
- **Secretary:** Margie Kolesar
- **Research & Projects Director:** Sue Lambeth
- **Membership Director:** Anne Coulter
- **Directors at Large:** Laurie Dougherty, Kathryn Potter, Paul Cripwell
- **Vacant Positions:** Program, Communications, Outreach

8. IN MEMORIAM

The meeting recognized members who passed away during the year:

- **John Townsend:** Long-time society supporter and Anglo-Celtic Roots leader

9. MEMBER RECOGNITION

2024-2025 Member Speakers

In the 2024 survey, members said it was impossible for them to choose one talk over another as the best of the year. The Board has ceased to award them, beginning in the 2024-2025 program year.

Instead, all member speakers were recognized for their careful research, informative and often poignant stories, and valuable tips and techniques:

- Carol Annett
- Ann Burns (absent)
- Paul Cripwell (absent)
- Sheila Dohoo Faure (online)
- Alison Hare (absent)
- Nancy Higgins
- Sue Lambeth
- Nigel Lloyd (online)
- Marnie McCall (online)
- Ken McKinlay
- Patricia Grainger
- Marianne Rasmus
- Veronica Scrimger
- Barbara Tose
- Glenn Wright
- Dianne Brydon

Hall of Fame Induction

2025 Inductee: Marianne Rasmus

Citation: Marianne Rasmus has made exemplary contributions to the society through:

- Eight years of board service
- Establishing the British Colonial America Special Interest Group over a decade ago
- Leadership as co-chair of the 2024 annual conference
- Numerous well-researched presentations to BIFHSGO and other genealogy societies
- Exemplifying BIFHSGO's vision to connect, educate, share, and inspire

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Moved by: Barb Tose

Result: CARRIED unanimously

Minutes prepared by: Margie Kolesar, Secretary
Date of approval: [To be confirmed at next AGM]

Appendices

- Annual Report 2024-2025 (posted on website)
- Financial Statements 2024 (available on website and at welcome desk)
- Agenda (distributed at meeting and posted on website)