



British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

2016–2017 Annual Reports

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10 JUNE 2017

PRESIDENT—BARBARA TOSE

It has been another successful year at BIFHSGO. Our excellent program of presentations continues to draw, on average, around 150 people per month and our membership remains around 550. A profitable and well-received conference was held last fall and another exceptional one is being planned for this coming September.

We have added two new databases to our online collection, thanks to the volunteer work of our members. We have moved ahead with our commitment to the Ontario Genealogical Society-Ottawa Branch (OGS-OB) library and the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) by providing funds to one for a subscription to the British Newspaper Archive and to the other for the purchase of relevant books to be made available through their lending service. We continue to partner with the City of Ottawa Archives on our conference and other mutually beneficial opportunities as they arise.

Many of our experienced volunteers have been working with OGS-OB this past year to produce the OGS provincial conference in Ottawa in June. As part of this year's celebrations, we agreed to host an evening at the OGS conference. Enrollment for our British Pub Night was brisk and the event was filled early. It promises to be a fun evening with local musical talent, a quiz and prizes galore!

Unfortunately we are losing another two long-term directors this year: Jane Down and Dave Cross. Both have contributed to BIFHSGO in so many ways. I would like to thank them for their contributions over the years.

However, we continue to be blessed with active members who are willing to volunteer to do the necessary work to bring all our members so many benefits over the year from our website to the conference, from the monthly meetings to the ACR and the eNewsletter. And we are even gaining a presence online, thanks to our regular Facebook and Twitter users. BIFHSGO could not operate without these volunteers and we would love to welcome you into our working circle.

COMMUNICATIONS—ANNE MORALEJO

This is my first year as Communications Director and I have a great team of Associate Directors working behind the scenes to keep members informed. They are: Gail Dever, webmaster; Lisa-Dawn Crawley, newsletter editor (and Facebook and Twitter guru); and Jean Kitchen, who edits *Anglo-Celtic Roots* (ably helped by her team of volunteers, Barbara Tose, Anne Renwick and Chris McPhail). A special thank-you goes to photographer Dena Palamedes for all her great photos (which we love to use every chance we get).

Thanks to everyone's efforts, members are kept current on events, new databases and indexes, and can read up on members' latest research.

We use a variety of media and are always looking for ways to enhance our efforts. This year, for example, we created a private Facebook Discussion Group for members, and the Board adopted a Social Media Policy to ensure we are keeping up with this communications area. The e-newsletter also has a new look and feel.

The collection of lecture videos available behind the Members' Only section of the website is expanding, giving members who live outside Ottawa or who missed a meeting the chance to enjoy the talk. Many thanks go to John McConkey, who records and edits the monthly lectures (which Gail then uploads to the website).

We also participated in CTV's *Canada in A Day* filming event (and one of our film clips has even been tentatively selected for the final film). The two-hour TV show celebrating Canada 150 has a planned broadcast date of Summer 2017.

I also want to thank Ann Adams for answering BIFHSGO phone calls, Sheila Faure for handling email queries, and the volunteers who organize BIFHSGO's special interest groups, like the Writing Group.

When it comes to Communications, BIFHSGO rocks!

EDUCATION—ANDREA HARDING

This year I took over the position that previously was held by Karin Keyes Endemann. My responsibilities were greatly aided by the fact that many of the Before BIFHSGO speakers had already been arranged. The talks were well attended and much appreciated by the members. Each speaker received a \$50 honorarium for the talk, an increase over previous years. The following is a list of the Before BIFHSGO talks that were given over the 2016–2017 meeting season.

Date	Speaker	Title of Talk
10 Sept 2016	—	Annual Conference weekend—no meeting
8 Oct 2016	Lesley Anderson	Online Family Trees
12 Nov 2016	Anne Moralejo and Lisa-Dawn Crawley	10 Ways Social Media Can Help Your Genealogy
10 Dec 2016	Marnie McCall	Copyright for Family History
14 Jan 2017	Romaine Honey	Genealogy at Your Ottawa Public Library
11 Feb 2017	Leanne Cooper	Introduction to <i>WikiTree</i>
11 Mar 2017	Ken McKinley	Searching <i>Findmypast's</i> Newspaper Archives
8 April 2017	Glenn Wright	Canadians on Vimy Ridge, 1917: A Short Guide to Resources and Research
13 May 2017	Jonathan F. Vance	They Didn't Write Names on These! Decoding the Postcard

MEMBERSHIP—KATHY WALLACE

Membership Summary

Members Summary

Category	2014	2015	2016	Category	2014	2015	2016
Individual	424	440	429	Individual	424	440	429
Family	76	82	86	Family	152	164	172
Institutions	22	24	24	Institutions	22	24	24
Total	522	546	539	Total	598	628	625

The number of members within the organization decreased slightly in calendar year 2016, although the number of family members is slightly higher. We added 58 individual new members and 9 new family memberships during the year (73 members in total). Four individuals also added their spouses and changed to family memberships. In each year a number of members do not renew, however, so gains are offset by losses.

In the fall of 2016 EasyNet Sites made an online 'join and renew' tool available. The Conference Event Management System set up in 2015 was used by many attendees to renew memberships as well. In 2016 some 118 transactions were made using the 'join and renew' link; they were a combination of renewals and new members. Members are happy that they can choose to pay online using PayPal or a credit card. Those who prefer can still pay by cheque or can pay by cash at monthly meetings.

PROGRAM—JANE DOWN

A few appeals to the membership produced the following slate of speakers (see table) for the 2016–2017 Saturday morning monthly meetings, which were held in The Chamber at Ben Franklin Place, 101 Centrepointe Drive, Nepean.

Dr. Jonathan Vance came from London, Ontario, to give two talks at the May 2017 meeting. His travel expenses to and from Ottawa were covered by BIFHSGO. Each speaker that gave a full monthly meeting talk received a \$100 honorarium, and the Great Moment speakers received an honorarium of \$25 each. The Saturday morning meetings were, once again, very popular, attracting around 150–170 people to each meeting.

Date	Speaker	Title of Talk
10 Sept 2016	-	Annual Conference weekend—no meeting
8 Oct 2016	Brian Laurie-Beaumont	Did Lucy and Isaac Actually Marry, and the Importance of Dying in the Right Sequence
12 Nov 2016	Irene Ip	First In, Last out: But What Came Between 1914 and 1919?
10 Dec 2016 Great Moments	Duncan Monkhouse	Mary Ann Flannery—From Ireland, You Say
	Susan Davis	The Drowning of Charles Dougherty
	Glenn Wright	Extra! Extra! Read All about It! Cousin Lyman and the Power of the Press
	Suzanne Eakin	The Tender Tale of a First World War British War Baby with Canadian Roots, Discovered Almost a Century Later
14 Jan 2017	Marianne Rasmus	Lanes, Trains and Parliament Hill
11 Feb 2017	Christine Jackson	The Queen's Coachman—Our Only Claim to Fame
11 Mar 2017	Gillian Leitch	From Famine to Prosperity to the Longue Pointe Asylum: the Varied Life of John Patrick Cuddy

8 April 2017	Gail Roger	Mostly at Sea: Captain Harry Grattidge
13 May 2017	Dr. Jonathan Vance	Was Your Ancestor at Vimy? Making Sense of the Battle on the Ground
10 June 2017 Great Moments	Gail Roger	The Elusive George Mason Hales
	Bill Arthurs	A Big Surprise With YDNA Test Results
	Dianne Brydon	Despite What You Tell Your Children, More Than One Official Record Exists to Prove What Really Happened
	Brenda Turner	A Mystery at Boughton Castle

Besides organizing the monthly program, finding speakers and attending monthly board meetings, the Program Director also collected abstracts of the speakers' talks and short biographies; posted these on the website; helped put the speakers' talks on the laptop on the Saturday mornings; and introduced and thanked the speakers at the meetings.

PUBLICITY—MARY-LOU SIMAC

Events

BIFHSGO had a staffed display table at the following events, sponsored by genealogical societies and other organizations:

- Voices from the Dust, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ottawa Stake, Ottawa (May 2016);
- Annual Conference, Ontario Genealogical Society, Toronto (June 2016);
- International Day, St. Joseph's Parish Church, Ottawa (November 2016); and
- Heritage Day, Ottawa City Hall, Ottawa (February 2017).

Being present at a variety of events permits BIFHSGO volunteers to promote the society and its activities to both family historians and the general public.

Since the 2017 conference theme does not pertain to either Scotland or Ireland, the decision was made to pass up on the invitations to participate in Hogmanay at Lansdowne Park on December 31, and to march in the St. Patrick's Day parade. However, to paraphrase Mr. Schwarzenegger: "we'll be back!" Another event at which BIFHSGO normally exhibits is the OGS Ottawa Branch's Gene-o-Rama, but because they are hosting the 2017 OGS Annual Conference, there was no event held.

Although BIFHSGO did not have a display table, we did have a presence at the WDYTYA event in early April 2017 in Birmingham, England. The Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS), of which BIFHSGO is a member, offered to display a specially designed BIFHSGO leaflet at their stand in the exhibit hall. Text and images were provided to the FFHS so that they could print and distribute a BIFHSGO leaflet to anyone visiting the FFHS stand at the event.

Other Initiatives

The *Tracing and Sharing British Isles Family History* general information brochure was updated and published in April 2017. This brochure is distributed to repositories and other public institutions across the region.

Monthly meetings were publicized by means of:

- flyers for the Fall, Winter and Spring meetings;
- "Our Town," *The Ottawa Citizen*, on the Thursday immediately preceding the meeting;
- the Gaelic Hour Newsletter (CHIN Radio)
- the BIFHSGO website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed;

- online event calendars: OttawaEvents.org; OttawaStart.com, the CBC Ottawa Community Calendar, CHOO/COPO, GlobalGenealogy.com, Allevents.in.Ottawa, and Kijiji Ottawa.
- occasional recorded community service announcements on the CBC Radio Ottawa (91.5) “In Town and Out” program, Saturday mornings.

Thank you to the BIFHSGO members who participated in these events, and to those who helped in other ways too numerous to mention!

RECORDING SECRETARY—GILLIAN LEITCH

This year has passed by rather quickly, and it has been marked by another successful Annual Conference and wonderful monthly meetings. As Recording Secretary I have occupied myself with the creation and management of agendas for the monthly Board meetings, and the minutes and reports of these meetings and of the Board. I have also taken on the responsibility of updating the corporate registration of the Society with the federal government, which was filed in April 2017. This is the end of my first two-year term as Secretary, and I look forward to another two years.

RESEARCH AND PROJECTS—DAVE CROSS

This year has seen the creation of two new databases. The first, called the Lancashire Diaries 1772–1910, was posted thanks to the efforts of BIFHSGO member Bryan D. Cook, who arranged for us to be entrusted by Arthur W. Critchley to make these indexes and related documents available on our website. With more than 1,000 surnames mentioned, this collection of diaries may provide clues to help you find your ancestors from east-central Lancashire, England. Read about hamlets, pubs, and schools that may have disappeared through the years. Learn about farm life and the cotton industry in the area.

Known as the Scowcroft Diaries, this database provides indexes of transcriptions by Arthur W. Critchley of a diary, kept for more than 50 years by Samuel Scowcroft. Transcriptions from an earlier diary that exchanged hands within the Scowcroft family have been amalgamated into this coverage of the 19th century and part of the 18th and 20th centuries.

The second, brought to us by Bryan D. Cook, John Reid and Glenn Wright and called Canadian Militia 1907, is an alphabetical index to a list of 1,991 Canadian militia personnel in the permanent or volunteer force in 1907 who were not born in Canada. Most were of British origin. The index contains each man’s surname and forenames or initials, rank, age, country of origin and military division, the page on which the name is found, and a link to the image of the original table.

Several years ago BIFHSGO members completed the indexing of the journals maintained by various chaplains of No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, which was run by the Canadian Army Medical Corps during World War I. These journals recorded soldiers who died at the unit, often citing the next of kin, which helped our volunteers to identify their families and prepare brief biographies for the database. With many thanks to project coordinator Sheila Faure and BIFHSGO members Lynne Willoughby, Lynda Gibson, Heather Carmody and David Agar, I am pleased to report that 320 biographies of the 879 listed soldiers have already been completed and posted. We have also improved the site during the year, adding the ability to identify which soldiers have biographies. You should check it out, and if interested in contributing to the project, let Sheila Faure know.

Discovery Tables continued this year, with a number of members volunteering to present on a topic and in so doing to help all our members learn about and inquire into various aspects of genealogy. All those who took the time to prepare and share their knowledge at the Discovery Tables deserve not only my thanks, but those of everyone who visited the displays.