



British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

2017–2018 Annual Reports

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

9 JUNE 2018

PRESIDENT—BARBARA TOSE

Although this year has been another successful one for BIFHSGO, it has not been without its challenges for the Board of Directors. Key positions remained vacant for several months, which caused an increased workload for the remaining board members or forced the postponement of important tasks until the position could be filled. New directors starting midway through the year had to familiarize themselves with their duties as well as deal with a backlog of issues. These situations put an extra strain on the board members and on the Board as an operating unit.

We now have a full slate of directors, all of whom will be continuing on in their roles next year. The Board has also scheduled a strategic planning session for the end of June to ensure we are on track and unified in our goals.

Yet despite the difficulties of the past year, we have accomplished much. Our conference, though not as profitable as usual, was well attended and enjoyed by all. Our second Ulster Historical Foundation Day made up for the conference loss by selling out. Our event once again held the record for attendance in the UHF North American Tour and also had the highest book sales of all the venues. Even the lunches were seen as a triumph!

The Ottawa Public Library showed how much they value their partnership with us by asking us to co-sponsor the first “Discover your Roots: Family and Local History Fair.” This was deemed such a success that we are now planning for next year’s event.

We continue to have steady attendance at our monthly meetings, an interesting and varied program with opportunities to learn about new resources and techniques as well as to hear some great stories. Our special interest groups are strong, well supported by the volunteers who organize them and continuing to grow.

There are challenges yet to be met. Program Director Andrea Harding has been finding it difficult to get members to speak at the monthly meetings and Jean Kitchen, editor of *Anglo-Celtic Roots*, has found it an increasing challenge to have a sufficient store of articles to let her rest easy each quarter. Another writing competition may temporarily solve this problem, but we need members to consider giving talks and writing articles more than they have done over the past year or so.

However, we continue to be blessed with a core group of active members who are willing to volunteer to bring all members the many benefits we have enjoyed over the years.

I began my term as president as we entered the second half of our 20th year. In my first year we undertook a survey of our members that is still providing us with useful information for determining our direction. We have just completed a much smaller survey, which we hope will help us connect our members to those with similar interests as well as assist in our programming. As I prepare to leave the presidency we are discussing how to celebrate our 25th anniversary. In some ways, it feels like things have come full circle. Being on the Board has been an educational and fulfilling experience and I would urge each of you to consider how you can help your society and make it stronger.

COMMUNICATIONS—SUSAN DAVIS

A number of changes have taken place this year for the communications team. Anne Moralejo stepped down as Communications Director and I have returned to the position after a three-year break. Lisa-Dawn Crawley also stepped down as our e-newsletter editor and social media guru. Thank you both!

Mary-Lou Simac, Sheila Dohoo Faure and Leanne Cooper volunteered to cover our social media activities while we create a social media strategy. Thank you, ladies!

Wanda Quinn, who joined BIFHSGO in 2017, volunteered to take over as newsletter editor. She's been enjoying learning more about the Society in her new role and we've been enjoying her informative newsletters. Welcome, Wanda!

Gail Dever gave notice that she would be stepping down in June as web manager after five years of dedicated service to our website. Over the years her passion for the site has been demonstrated through finding new ways to bring attention to BIFHSGO's resources and activities, while providing support and advice to a wide variety of volunteers. Gail will continue to share her communications expertise with us as we develop communications plans in the future. Thank you, Gail!

Lynda Gibson and John McConkey are working together to update and organize our online research resources. They have been working with John Sayers and Patricia Roberts-Pichette on updates to the ever-popular Home Children material. And Patricia's updated A-Z Middlemore Index will be posted to the site this year. Thank you, all!

Sheila Dohoo Faure, Lynda Gibson, Lynne Willoughby and Heather Carmody continue to research and write soldier biographies for the No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station database on our site. To date there are 402 bios, some of which have been shared in *Anglo-Celtic Roots*. Thank you, ladies!

Jean Kitchen continues to provide her editing expertise to producing *Anglo-Celtic Roots*, our quarterly journal, as well as in support of other BIFHSGO products. She is assisted with ACR by Barbara Tose, Christine Jackson, Anne Renwick and Chris McPhail. Thank you, all!

Brian Glenn, now assisted by Bob Mallet, continues to provide web support for all things conference and for event registration. Brian plans to hand over these responsibilities to Bob in the future. Thank you, gentlemen!

Christine Jackson has joined Dena Palamedes in taking photos of our speakers, at our conference and at other events. Thank you, ladies!

This year we produced a communications plan for the conference. In the coming months we will be developing a communications plan for the Society, a plan for revamping our website and a strategy for our social media activities. We'll also be looking for more stories to tell, whether in ACR or on the web.

New volunteers always welcome!

EDUCATION AND PROGRAM—ANDREA HARDING

This year we had a fascinating and varied selection of speakers on various topics, including family anecdotes and history, genealogical research strategies, military history and archives, and the efforts made to identify and lay to rest previously unidentified Canadian soldiers.

All presentations were held in The Chamber at Ben Franklin Place on Centrepointe Drive in Nepean. Each speaker that gave a full monthly meeting talk received a \$100 honorarium, and Great Moment speakers received a \$50 honorarium. The Saturday morning meetings were, once again, very popular, attracting around 120–150 people each meeting.

In addition, we held several new events this year that were well received by our membership, including a Christmas-themed coffee and cookies Before BIFHSGO session, and a very successful Ulster Historical

Foundation Day, with Fintan Mullan and Gillian Hunt from the Ulster Historical Foundation making their only Canadian stop in their North American tour.

Besides organizing the monthly program, finding speakers and attending monthly board meetings, the Program Director also coordinates the collection of speaker biographies and abstracts of their talks, arranges to have them posted on the website, and introduces and thanks the speakers at the meetings.

The following is a complete list of talks received this past year.

Date	Event	Speaker(s)	Title of Talk(s)
9 September 2017	Before BIFHSGO	Various experts	Questions and Answers
	Monthly Meeting	John McConkey	The Sinking of the SS <i>Portsmouth</i>
14 October 2017	Before BIFHSGO	Susan Davis	The Drouin Collection—Research Strategies
	Monthly Meeting	Susan Davis	Untangling a Parish to Find Family
18 November 2017	Before BIFHSGO	Carol Reid	Using the Collections of the Military History Research Centre to Aid and Augment Genealogy
	Monthly Meeting	Tara Grant	Not So Quiet on the Western Front— The Grants of Formby in the Great War
9 December 2017	Great Moments	Brenda Turner	In Killin
		John McConkey	The Skeleton in My Closet
		Sharon and Jeff Moor	A Young Soldier
		Matthew Harding	Einstein, eBay and the Red Cross— How I Found Fame and Fortune Using my Genealogical Superpowers
13 January 2018	Before BIFHSGO	Tara Grant	Searching for your WW I British Army Officer
	Monthly Meeting	David Jeanes	The Kemeys-Tynte Family of Cefn Mably, a South Wales Estate
10 February 2018	Before BIFHSGO	Kyla Ubbink	Baling out: Avoiding and Responding to Water Damage and Floods in Archival Collections
	Monthly Meeting	Barbara Angus, Tracey Arial, and Claire Lindell	The Book Creators' Journey
10 March 2018	Ulster Historical Foundation Day	Fintan Mullan and Gillian Hunt	Irish Workshop
14 April 2018	Before BIFHSGO	Sheila Dohoo Faure	No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station
	Monthly Meeting	Dr. Sarah Lockyer	Identifying the Remains of Canadian Soldiers from the First and Second World Wars
12 May 2018	Before BIFHSGO	Various experts	Questions and Answers
	Monthly Meeting	Susan Davis, Marianne Rasmus, Darrell Kennedy and Brian Laurie-Beaumont	Were you in Salem in 1692?
9 June 2018	Great Moments	David Jeanes	Was my Great-great Uncle David Jeanes a Murderer?
		Dianne Brydon	Who's Crazy?
		John Reid	A Great Little Great War Story
		Ann Burns	Little Miracles from Moss Cottage

For 2018/2019, there are several exciting presentations already lined up, including Lucille Campey, Brian Tackaberry, UEL, and several of our local members: Marianne Rasmus, Christine Jackson and Pam Cooper.

MEMBERSHIP—KATHY WALLACE

Membership Summary

Members Summary

Category	2015	2016	2017	Category	2015	2016	2017
Individual	440	429	400	Individual	440	429	400
Family	82	86	74	Family	164	172	148
Institutions	24	24	22	Institutions	24	24	22
Total	546	539	496	Total	628	625	570

The number of members within the organization decreased again slightly in 2017. We had 34 individual new members and 3 new family memberships join during the year (40 members in total). In each year some members do not renew, however, so gains are offset by losses.

PUBLICITY—MARY-LOU SIMAC

This was a busy year, full of special events and challenges.

2017 Events

The **OGS annual conference**, held June 15–18 at Algonquin College, was a busy time for BIFHSGO, as a number of members volunteered on the organizing committee and also helped out in various other ways during the conference. Conference attendance was over 600 people. Our booth in the Marketplace was staffed by Gail Dever, Gillian Leitch, Anne Moralejo, Duncan Monkhouse, Dena Palamedes, Marianne Rasmus, Mary-Lou Simac, Anne Sterling, Kathy Wallace, and Glenn Wright.

Ancestry Day followed on June 19, and we had a display table in an excellent location right outside the theatre. Attendance was over 300 people, including a significant number of people new to genealogy. Both the OGS conference and Ancestry Day provided good opportunities for BIFHSGO visibility.

The Arnprior and McNab/Braeside Archives held an **Archives Day** on 14 October. Andrea Harding and Barbara Tose staffed the BIFHSGO booth for the afternoon. This was an opportunity to inform interested parties about BIFHSGO, as well as to network with potential speakers and exhibitors for the 2018 conference.

Hogman-eh!, the New Year's Eve celebration organized by the Scottish Society of Ottawa at the Aberdeen Pavilion at Lansdowne Park was our next event. Although the temperatures were Arctic-like, spirits were high, and it was an excellent opportunity to interact with the general public, and to promote the Scottish family history theme of the 2018 annual conference. Pam Cooper, Bob Lamoureux, Jeannette Logan, Mary-Lou Simac and Glenn Wright staffed the table, and they spoke with almost 90 people during the course of the evening.

2018 Events

Sunday Nite Lite on February 18 at Bells Corners United Church featured Duncan Monkhouse, Barbara Tose and Glenn Wright as speakers at an event entitled "All in the Family— Conversations about the Rewards of Genealogy," organized by the church. This was an excellent opportunity to inform members of the public about the society's activities in a small-group setting.

Heritage Day, organized by the Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa and the City of Ottawa, was held on February 20. The weather (mostly) cooperated, and we had good response to our display. Mary-Lou Simac and Glenn Wright represented BIFHSGO.

The Federation of Family History Societies, of which BIFHSGO is a member, had a booth at **RootsTech** from February 27 to March 2. A promotional text and a PowerPoint presentation about BIFHSGO were

developed and submitted to FFHS. They showcased our information whenever it was requested by a delegate.

Two April events kept us busy: **Gene-O-Rama**, organized by OGS Ottawa Branch, on the 13th and 14th, at the Confederation Education Centre, and the **Family History Fair**, a new event directed at the general public, organized by the Ottawa Public Library and BIFHSGO, on the 21st at Ben Franklin Place. We had a display table at both events, which were deemed successes. BIFHSGO members who organized and/or participated in these events were Ann Burns, Leanne Cooper, Pam Cooper, Susan Courage, Andrea Harding, Ken McKinlay, Duncan and Shirley Monkhouse, John Reid, Mary-Lou Simac, Barbara Tose, and Glenn Wright.

Monthly Meeting Publicity

The monthly meetings are publicized via distribution of a flyer (produced by Christine Jackson), postings to online event calendars, newsletters, mentions by bloggers (special thanks to John Reid and Gail Dever), ads in the *Ottawa Citizen*, and social media.

UHF Day Publicity

Ulster Historical Foundation Day on March 10 was publicized through the same methods as noted above, augmented by advertising in Irish-focused publications and event calendars.

Tracing and Sharing British Isles Family History Brochure

The brochure (April 2017 version) was reprinted and sent to Ottawa Public Library branches. It is available at all BIFHSGO public events and monthly meetings.

Challenges

Two Board members who were heavily involved in various aspects of social media resigned in November and December 2017. Sheila Dohoo Faure and Mary-Lou Simac have volunteered to fill this gap in regards to publicizing our meetings, activities and resources on Facebook and Twitter. Their efforts have been supplemented by Dena Palamedes, who posts photos and brief re-caps of monthly meetings to Facebook.

Thank You!

Thank you to all the members who helped with the various events at which BIFHSGO had a display booth. It would be impossible for BIFHSGO to be present at these events without their expertise, enthusiasm and willingness to give of their time.

RECORDING SECRETARY—GILLIAN LEITCH

During the past year I have carried out the usual duties of the BIFHSGO secretary. These are mostly administrative tasks, such as booking meeting venues, creating agendas, recording votes, taking notes and creating minutes of board meetings. I am responsible for circulating them in a timely fashion to the board members. I maintain the files in our Dropbox system so they are readily accessible to board members. I update the corporate registration of the Society with the federal government in accordance with Section 133 under the *Canada Corporations Act*: this was filed in April 2018. I also prepare the various awards for the Annual General Meeting and ensure that the recipients will be in attendance at the meeting.

RESEARCH AND PROJECTS—LYNDA GIBSON

I took over this position at the end of October 2017. Although no new projects were commenced in the past year, several have been advanced.

BIFHSGO is recognized for its knowledge about British Home Children, those young people brought to Canada from the British Isles between about 1869 and 1948. We continue to work with Library and Archives Canada in indexing the names of Home Children found in passenger lists of ships arriving in Canada (hosted on the Library and Archives Canada website), and the indexing of Middlemore Home Children arriving in Canada between 1873 and 1933 (hosted on the BIFHSGO website.) We also host indexes of various subsets of Home Children who settled in Canada: for example, the Fegan children.

The Middlemore Index will shortly be updated and finalized on our website, a work commenced in 2001, involving over 50 volunteers and managed expertly by Patricia Roberts-Pichette for the entire time. Congratulations, Patricia for this amazing achievement!

We have recently revised and updated our webpages associated with the various Home Children projects. We are continuing to tweak our Home Children webpages to ensure users will get the best possible information and direction on how to obtain copies of the documents identified in our indexes. The new pages will assist users in understanding the location and types of resources from which information in our indexes is found, as well as to understand the background of the projects. This work could not be completed without the support of numerous dedicated volunteers, but especially of Patricia Roberts-Pichette, John Sayers and Sheila Dohoo Faure.

The No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station project now has almost 50% of the soldiers' biographies posted. This is thanks to the great team of biographers, led by Sheila Dohoo Faure, who spend countless hours bringing life to the stories of these brave men. We have added metadata to the biographies, to enhance their ability to be found by search engines such as Google, and we have added a column to the index to include the full researched names of the soldiers, after a biography has been posted. New volunteers are always welcome. A highlight for the year was Sheila's presentation at the April Before BIFHSGO session, where she explained how the biographies are prepared. Congratulations to Sheila and all the volunteers writing these wonderful bios.

In conjunction with the new Communications Director, Susan Davis, the new Director-at-Large, John McConkey, and the Web Manager, Gail Dever, we have been working to understand, update and streamline our website. Many pages have been updated and revised, indexes have been expanded with new information, and gremlin errors have been identified and corrected.

The Discovery Computer was not used extensively the past year due to operational needs for the computer and vacation schedules. However, when the computer was set up it attracted a great deal of attention and I had numerous conversations with both novice and experienced genealogists. This is a great opportunity to bounce an idea off someone new.

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE—JOHN MCCONKEY

I became a Director-at-Large in January 2018; this is a Board position that does not have a fixed mandate. The Board agreed that I would concentrate on the technical aspects of BIFHSGO operations. My first task was to become involved in the database portfolio that BIFHSGO maintains on its website. To date I have updated the No.1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station database (with thanks to Sheila Faure) and the Home Children Deaths database (with thanks to John Sayers). Currently I am working with Patricia Roberts-Pichette, Susan Davis and Lynda Gibson on a major update to the Middlemore Home Children Index, which we expect to have completed this year.