



## **British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa**

# **2018–2019 Annual Reports**

## **TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **8 JUNE 2019**

#### **PRESIDENT—DUNCAN MONKHOUSE**

It has been another successful year at BIFHSGO. Our excellent program of presentations continues to draw, on average, 150 people per month and our membership remains around 550. Our established special interest groups, DNA, Scottish and Writing, are strong and well supported by the volunteers who organize them. They continue to grow, showing an expanded interest in these specialized areas of our genealogical research. A new special interest group was added this year, British Colonial America; their membership has increased from meeting to meeting.

#### **Conference**

A profitable and well received conference on England, Wales and DNA was held last fall and another is being planned for this year on *Family History: Past, Present & Future* with exceptional speakers including Blaine Bettinger, Cyndi Ingle, Audrey Collins, and Nancy Loe.

#### **Board**

The Board members remained constant this year, however two directors have decided not to return for next year, Lynda Gibson and Andrea Harding. I would like to thank Lynda Gibson for the tremendous amount of time and effort that she has put in over the last year in performing her roles as Research and Projects Director. The completion of the Middlemore British Home Children project has been an accomplishment 15 years in the making by many volunteers, but Lynda shepherded it to a successful conclusion. We have all immensely enjoyed the program for the last couple of years, and this is due to the hard work and dedication of Andrea Harding, who has been the director responsible for both the education and program portfolios. Andrea has set up most of the program for next year, a tremendous aid for the incoming program director, thus ensuring that we will enjoy an excellent program for the next year. Three director positions were up for election this year—Secretary, Research and Projects, and Director-at-large. With Andrea's departure, the opportunity arose to change the Board positions slightly. Therefore, the Director-at large position will be dropped and the Program director and Education director positions that were both being filled by Andrea will again be split into two positions.

#### **Volunteers**

Another notable volunteer who decided to move on to other activities was Jean Kitchen. Jean has been the editor of the *Anglo-Celtic Roots* quarterly journal (ACR) for the last seven years, and the general editor for BIFHSGO for that same period. Her review of all the written word generated by BIFHSGO volunteers will be sorely missed. Her role as ACR editor has been taken over by Barbara Tose with assistance provided by Christine Jackson, Sheila Faure and the rest of the team Jean worked with. Barbara is facing similar difficulties to Jean in getting articles for the ACR, so if you have an interesting story to tell, Barbara would be interested in publishing it in the ACR.

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. That said, a number of activities require volunteers, for a wide range of time commitment. If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, please consider BIFHSGO.

## **Strategic Planning**

In the past year, the Board worked through a strategic planning exercise. Several goals were highlighted for the Board to work on during the upcoming years. Some are simple, some not. Some have been accomplished: vision, mission and values statements; job descriptions; new member welcome plans; and recruitment of new volunteers for key roles. Others are in the works and we hope to complete them in the upcoming year.

## **Partnerships**

The Ottawa Public Library showed how much they value their partnership with us by asking us to continue to co-sponsor their “Discover your Roots: Family and Local History Fair.” We are continuing our partnership with the City of Ottawa Archives, both in the Archives on the third floor of 100 Tallwood Drive and with the use of the meeting rooms in the Archives building.

I started my term as president as BIFHSGO was entering its 25th year of existence. It has been an exciting journey from the start in 1994 to today. Genealogical research has moved to a large degree from microfilm to computers to the Internet. But BIFHSGO continues to be the go-to place for education and mentoring in the areas of English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh genealogy.

## **COMMUNICATIONS—SUSAN DAVIS**

### **eNewsletter**

An ad for a newsletter editor on the Volunteer Ottawa website caught Emily Rahme’s attention and led to her attending our February meeting. Not only did she volunteer for the position, she joined BIFHSGO. Emily took over the editor role from Wanda Quinn. Thank you, Wanda and welcome Emily! Emily also volunteered to be a proofreader for *Anglo-Celtic Roots* and to assist with our storytelling project (see below).

### ***Anglo-Celtic Roots (ACR)***

It was looking pretty grim for a while when Jean Kitchen announced her retirement as ACR editor in the fall and no volunteer was found to replace her. Jean had served as editor for seven years and as assistant editor for four years before that. Thankfully, Barbara Tose, our past president and the ACR layout editor since 2013, stepped forward to take over as editor. Thank you, Jean for many great ACR issues and Barbara for taking on this new role! Barbara is assisted by Christine Jackson, Anne Renwick, Emily Rahme and Chris McPhail.

### **25 Years of Storytelling, a 25th Anniversary Project**

Our newest volunteer, Gwen Gibson, joined our team just in time. She is now leading our effort to search the ACR archives for stories to post to a new section of our website, [25 Years of Storytelling](#). Emily Rahme and Terry Changyu also worked on the project. We’ll be sharing some of these stories at the September 2019 monthly meeting.

### **Website**

Always a work in progress, a small army of volunteers are working to update and improve our website. Some accomplishments to highlight include:

- [Middlemore Index](#) and related research guide updates posted
- [No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station](#) now contains 489 bios
- [Volunteer section](#) updated to include new descriptions for 29 positions
- [About Us](#) updated with our new vision, mission and value statement
- [Library section](#) updated and new reading lists posted
- [Speakers Bureau](#) launched
- [Links to Online Resources](#) reviewed and updated

Volunteers: John McConkey, Patricia Roberts-Pichette, Lynda Gibson, Kathy Wallace, Pam Cooper, Grace

Lewis, Andrea Harding, Jean Kitchen, Sheila Dohoo Faure, Lynne Willoughby, Heather Carmody, Marcia Clement, Nigel Lloyd, Larry Richardson, Gwen Gibson, Duncan Monkhouse, Barbara Tose, Gillian Leitch, Brian Glenn and Bob Mallett.

### **Rolling Screens and Queries**

Sheila Dohoo Faure puts together the announcement slide show filled with information for every meeting. You can now find these monthly decks available in the [News section of our website](#). Sheila is also the person who responds to our email queries and phone messages. On average Sheila responds to five emails a week on topics such as home children, activities, membership, and general research.

### **Photos**

Capturing photographic memories of our meetings, conferences and special events is the work of Dena Palamedes, assisted by Christine Jackson and Barbara Tose.

Thank you all! Many hands make light work. New volunteers always welcome!

## **EDUCATION AND PROGRAM—ANDREA HARDING**

This year we had a variety of speakers on diverse topics including Irish pioneers, cemetery history, DNA research, and genealogy storytelling. Our speakers included several published authors sharing their research and writing processes.

All presentations were held in The Chamber at Ben Franklin Place on Centrepointe Drive in Nepean. Each speaker who gave a full monthly meeting talk received a \$100 honorarium, with “Great Moment” speakers receiving a \$50 honorarium for their shorter presentations. The Saturday morning meetings were, once again, very popular attracting 130-185 people each meeting.

This year we also co-sponsored, with the Ottawa Public Library, the *Discover Your Roots: Genealogy and Local History Fair*, a highly successful community outreach that brought together members of the public, some great BIFHSGO speakers, and exhibitors. We are intending to make this an annual event to capitalize on its success.

Starting in January this year, we began our new Discovery Tables program, a great place to meet other members researching family in the same county or city. Each month we highlighted two topics of interest, taken from our member survey. We have asked members to share their knowledge and resources with other members as a way to connect and inspire. Along with the Discovery Tables, BIFHSGO volunteers with the Ottawa Branch OGS (OBOGS) Library have created lists of resources available within OBOGS that can help our members.

Along with organizing the monthly program, finding speakers, choosing an education topic, and attending monthly board meetings, the Education and Program Director also coordinates the collection of speaker bios 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	Speaker(s)	Title of Talk(s)
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Susan Courage	Getting to know the DNA SIG
8 Sept 2018	Lucille Campey	Ontario and Quebec's Irish Pioneers: Farmers, Labourers and Lumberjacks
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Marianne Rasmus	Using Local Family History Societies in Your Genealogical Research
13 Oct 2018	Annette Cormier O'Connor MScN (Nursing, U Toronto), PhD (Medical Science, U Toronto)	Establishing Mitochondrial DNA Signatures of Early Immigrant Mothers: Successes and Cautions
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Members of the Scottish SIG	Introduction to the Scottish Special Interest Group
10 Nov 2018	Dr. André Levesque	Beechwood National Cemetery: Its History, Stories and Records
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Christmas Social	Kick off celebrations for 25th anniversary
8 Dec 2018  Great Moments	Bobby Kay	And Her Name Was . . .
	Jamey Burr	Quakers in the Attic
	Ken McKinlay	A McKinlay in New Zealand
	Duncan Monkhouse	Where were YOUR ancestors on December 2, 1854?
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Sheila Faure	A Brief History of BIFHSGO—Celebrate 25 years
12 Jan 2019	Kristen Den Hartog and Tracy Kasaboski	The Cow Keeper's Wish—A Genealogical Journey
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Duncan Monkhouse	An Exciting Future for BIFHSGO: the next 25 years
9 Feb 2019	Brian Tackaberry	Bathurst Settlers to Murray Township—England to Perth/Richmond 200th Anniversary
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Gloria Tubman	Research Opens Doors
9 Mar 2019	John McConkey	A Trip to Northern Ireland - Research, Sightseeing and Ancestor Tracking
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Pam Cooper/Grace Lewis	What's in the OGS library for you?
13 April 2019	Maggie Wheeler	All My Worldly Goods: Murder Mystery and a Personal Journey into the History of the British Home Children
BEFORE BIFHSGO	Dena Palamedes	How to build a photo album/ Family History Album online using Picaboo
11 May 2019	Marianne Rasmus	Expanding that Empty Branch on the Genetic Family Tree
BEFORE BIFHSGO	-	Annual General Meeting
8 June 2019  Great Moments	Nigel Lloyd	A Dark Chapter in a Successful Life
	Mike Jaques	A Poor Racine
	Gillian Leitch	Finding Frances
	Bobby Kay	Family Fiction, Facts Found

For the 2019/2020 year, several exciting presentations are already lined up including Dominique Boulais from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), and BIFHSGO members Sandra Adams and Christine Jackson.

## MEMBERSHIP—KATHY WALLACE

Number of Memberships by Type				Number of Members			
Category	2016	2017	2018	Category	2016	2017	2018
Individual	429	400	420	Individual	429	400	420
Family	86	74	76	Family	172	148	152
Institutions	24	22	23	Institutions	24	22	23
Total	539	496	519	Total	625	570	595

In 2018, 64 new individual members joined, and 11 former members re-joined after an absence. Twelve new family memberships were also established (24 members). The increase was offset, however, by the fact that some 70+ members did not renew in 2018. The number not renewing is about average for the last few years. The increase in membership was associated with a 'members only' one-day seminar and with conference attendees joining to get the reduced registration rate for members.

## PUBLICITY—MARY-LOU SIMAC

### Event Participation—2018 (May–December)

Although we did not have a booth at the **OGS annual conference**, held June 1–3 at the University of Guelph, 500 annual conference brochures were provided for a delegate bag insert.

On June 16, we had a table at the LDS Church's annual **Voices from the Dust** event. The event attracts church members, genealogists from the Ottawa area and people just starting out with their family history. Activities include free talks and rebroadcasts of *Roots Tech* sessions, as well as an exhibit hall.

**Hogman-eh!**, the New Year's Eve celebration organized by the Scottish Society of Ottawa at the Aberdeen Pavilion at Lansdowne Park, was our last event of 2018. It was an excellent opportunity to interact with the public and to promote BIFHSGO. Pam Cooper, Marilyn Lindsay and Duncan Monkhouse staffed the table and spoke with just over 100 people during the course of the evening.

### Event Participation—2019 (January–April)

Heritage Day, organized by Capital Heritage Connexion Patrimoine de la Capitale (CHC|CPC) and the City of Ottawa, was held on February 19. This is a public event which brings together heritage-related organizations in Ottawa. The weather cooperated and we had good response to our display at City Hall. Mary-Lou Simac and Lynda Gibson represented BIFHSGO with assistance from John Reid.

Two April events kept us busy:

- **Gene-O-Rama**, organized by Ottawa Branch-Ontario Genealogical Society, on the 5th and 6th, at the Confederation Education Centre; and
- **Genealogy and Local History Fair**, organized by the Ottawa Public Library and BIFHSGO and directed at the general public, on the 27th at Ben Franklin Place.

Lynda Gibson and Barbara Tose staffed our table at **Gene-O-Rama**. Most attendees were already members of either OGS or BIFHSGO (or both), however, 13 non-members stopped by our table and appreciated the information they received. The conference brochures were available at this event.

The second annual Ottawa Public Library/BIFHSGO *Discover Your Roots: Genealogy and Local History Fair* was very successful. We spoke with about 60 people at our table, many of whom were new to family history. The following BIFHSGO members helped organize the event, spoke at the event or were in the resource room: Andrea Harding, Barbara Tose, Marianne Rasmus, Leanne Cooper, Lynda Gibson, Pam Cooper, Jane Down, Ken McKinlay, Duncan Monkhouse, Lynne Willoughby, Suzanne LeBlanc, John Reid, and Mary-Lou Simac.

### Monthly Meeting Publicity

The monthly meetings are posted to BIFHSGO social media (Facebook, Twitter), and publicized via distribution of a flyer (produced by Christine Jackson and Mary-Lou Simac): January to June 2018, September to December 2018, and January to June 2019 meetings.

The meetings are also posted to online event calendars such as those run by Global Genealogy and Ottawaevents.org and are sent to the OGS eWeekly newsletter. They are also often mentioned by bloggers (special thanks to John Reid and Gail Dever), and we also take out paid ads in the Thursday *Our Town* section of the *Ottawa Citizen*.

### CBC Radio Interviews

One of the monthly meeting speakers, Dr. André Levesque, was interviewed in connection with his talk on Beechwood Cemetery at the November 10, 2018 monthly meeting. Leanne Cooper was interviewed on April 26, 2019 in conjunction with her talk at the following day's *Discover Your Roots: Genealogy and Local History Fair*.

### Business Cards

Business cards were printed in December 2018 and distributed for the first time at Hogman-eh! The cards promote the 2019 BIFHSGO conference, the SIGs, the monthly meetings, the website and the new vision statement.

### Tracing and Sharing British Isles Family History brochure

The *Tracing and Sharing British Isles Family History* brochure is our basic general information brochure. It was updated and reprinted in April 2019. It is available at all BIFHSGO public events and monthly meetings, is sent to the Ottawa Public Library branches, the Family History Center, Library and Archives Canada, and is posted to our website under *About Us—Media/Publicity*.

### Social Media

Facebook and Twitter continue to be important vehicles to get out our message. Three of our posts to Facebook were seen by more than 1,000 people (many are seen by less than 500) and a key reason is that more people “shared” the post to their own followers, thus increasing the visibility. Don’t just “like”—please “share” and you will help BIFHSGO.

Date of Facebook Post	Subject	Number of Engagements (actions by user)	Number of Shares	Number of People Reached
September 27, 2018	Conference Marketplace	318	10	2,228
October 8, 2018	October Monthly Meeting	140	5	1,008
November 3, 2018	November Monthly Meeting	83	13	1,862

### Thank You!

Thank you to all the members who helped with the various publicity initiatives, especially the events. It would be impossible for BIFHSGO to participate in 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 file 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**

Early in 2019, the **Middlemore Indexing Project**, of which Patricia Roberts-Pichette is Coordinator, reached a high point when BIFHSGO went live with a comprehensive and updated index of the more than 5,000 British home children who came to Canada with the Middlemore agency, a.k.a. the Children's Emigration Homes of Birmingham, England. Patricia had previously compiled a *nominal* index of the Middlemore children using extractions made from LAC's microfilms by more than 50 volunteers, most of them BIFHSGO members, who more than 15 years ago generously gave their time to work under Patricia's leadership. BIFHSGO posted that Index online in 2008.

In the last few years Patricia has worked to update the Middlemore Index, adding all the references to those children's names wherever they appear in the Middlemore source documents, none of which are online or otherwise searchable. Therefore, by consulting the new updated Middlemore Index, researchers can now know instantly in which documents a specific child's name appears and where the associated documents are located. This will largely relieve Patricia (and BIFHSGO) from often time-consuming searches when responding to enquiries about documentary sources for Middlemore home children. We could not have achieved this position without the assistance of the many original volunteers and particularly Patricia's untiring enthusiasm and dedication to the project over the years. Thank you all for your generosity toward making this happen.

John Sayers continued his dedication in managing our other home children projects. The RG76 General Correspondence project is moving slowly. It consists of 199 different files to be extracted from 97 different films with the information eventually being integrated into the Home Children Database on LAC's website. So far 24 volunteers have done or continue to do extractions. Our work on home children is internationally recognized and, again, we could not do this without the continuing dedication of John and all the volunteers who have assisted. Volunteers who wish to help and do extractions from their home are very welcome.

Six volunteers continue to make headway in completing biographies of the WW I soldiers who died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. In early April, they had completed 489 bios with 390 to go. You can read about one of these soldiers in each quarterly issue of ACR and can realize how humbling it is to the volunteers to be able to bring to life the stories of each of these brave men. If you like to research and pay homage to our fallen soldiers, this is the perfect venue for your volunteer time.

One new project commenced and was completed this year: John Reid transcribed a list of 1,834 names of children who had been evacuated under private sponsorship from England from the danger posed by WW II. They arrived in Canada and settled in almost all provinces. The list was compiled in 1943 by the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General. While the intention was that the children would return to Britain when the danger was past—and most did, many eventually decided to make Canada their home, including Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, John Polanyi.

Many updates have been made to the Research menu and pages on our website, so be sure to check them out.

## **DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE—JOHN MCCONKEY**

In keeping with the direction the Board set for me at the beginning of my term last year, I have concentrated on website renewal and, in particular, updates to our research databases. I spent a significant portion of the past year working with Patricia Roberts-Pichette, Lynda Gibson and Susan Davis on the production of an updated and expanded version of the Middlemore Home Children Index. This went “live” on the BIFHSGO website 8 Jan 2019 and represents the culmination of a project Patricia started in 2001 with a host of volunteers.

In order to save costs, the format of the new index was designed “in-house”. Employing this new format, I have also updated the Women’s Emigration database and used it to publish the brand-new WW II Child Evacuees database which John Reid has transcribed from LAC sources.

I participated in the Board’s strategic planning session that took place in June last year and was given responsibility for the “Partnership and Outreach” initiative. As a first step I have been in contact with the Isle of Wight Family History Society (IWFHS) to explore the possibility of establishing an arrangement that would be mutually beneficial to our two societies.

In addition to my duties as a Board director, I continue to provide technical services for our monthly meetings and annual conferences. We now have a catalogue of over 80 videos of presentations available for member viewing on our *YouTube* channel. Keeping our technical equipment operational and up-to-date is a constant challenge. BIFHSGO owns two digital projectors, several computers and a variety of microphones. The latest addition to the equipment portfolio is a new laptop computer, replacing one that was overdue for retirement. BIFHSGO is now well prepared to provide technical services for the 25th Anniversary Conference.