



British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

2023–2024 Annual Reports

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8 JUNE 2024

President—Dianne Brydon

Overview

What a year we have had.

- ❖ We offered our first “Back to Basics” series of talks by Ken McKinlay, where even the most seasoned family historians learned new tips, or were reminded of things we have forgotten.
- ❖ Our membership held steady, more people joined from outside Ottawa, and the number of people gathering together at monthly meetings increased.
- ❖ We organized our third annual virtual Conference on the theme “Leaving Their Scottish Homes: What Were They Thinking?”
- ❖ Our special interest groups (SIGs)—British Colonial America, DNA, London and Writing—are ably led by Marianne Rasmus, Susan Courage, Maureen Amey and Carol Annett, and well supported by the loyal members who participate.
- ❖ Barbara Tose and her team published four editions of the *Anglo-Celtic Roots* (ACR) quarterly journal, featuring members’ stories.
- ❖ Work on the various BIFHSGO research projects picked up pace.

Behind the scenes, our focus this year was on taking stock of our organization after 30 years and getting ready for our 30th anniversary being marked this year. Every Board member was involved. The following are some highlights:

- ❖ As a group we reaffirmed our vision, Mission and Values and set goals to attain from 2024 to 2026.
- ❖ The Program Director scheduled BIFHSGO highlights from the past 30 years in the 2024–2025 season.
- ❖ The Research Director worked with the Web Manager to identify when various components of the Name Index have been developed over the years, and by whom.
- ❖ The Web Manager (ex officio) published searchable indexes of all issues of ACR since 1995 and videos of presentations made to the Society since 2011, and created a 30th anniversary web page.
- ❖ The Outreach Director began to establish and re-establish relationships with sister organizations and increase our visibility in the community.
- ❖ The Secretary reorganized the administrative files and ensured we had included every agreement, legal document and all meeting minutes created over the years.
- ❖ The Past President reviewed and simplified the job descriptions of Board directors.

- ❖ The Treasurer reviewed our banking procedures and investment options to bring everything up to date.
- ❖ Our Membership Director collected member feedback on a variety of activities which will guide us as we move forward.

Status Report on BIFHSGO's Goals 2024–2026

In April we shared with members our goals for 2024 to 2026. A status report on those that are already underway or completed follows here:

Education:

- ❖ Assist members with their research skills: the “Back to Basics” series was completed in May 2024.

Partnerships and Outreach:

- ❖ Increase partnerships with other genealogy organizations to share information: underway with a focus on Irish groups in preparation for the 2024 conference; build on partnerships established with Scottish groups for 2023 conference.
- ❖ Increase BIFHSGO's profile the community: hosted a table at the Ottawa Regional Heritage Fair for middle and high school students; participated in the Volunteer Ottawa Open House in May.

Research and Projects:

- ❖ Improve the accuracy and completeness of the British Home Children (BHC) databases in BIFHSGO's Name Index: the plan and budget were approved for publication of the new database; Middlemore entries were corrected.
- ❖ Continue research and projects in support of the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) 2006 MOU by publishing new data through LAC and the Name Index, and by fostering the relationship with LAC and other cultural organizations: contacts have been renewed at LAC and indexes were transferred; the MOU will be renewed in the coming months.
- ❖ Complete the descriptive inventory listing of the John Sayers' files and records and develop a plan for its management: underway.
- ❖ Encourage the development of new projects, and support project leads and their volunteers: two research procedural guides were approved by the Board this year, namely, the *Revised Policy for BIFHSGO's Research Projects* and *BIFHSGO's Project Proposal Template*.
- ❖ Highlight BIFHSGO's volunteers through the Program Spotlight for the 30th Anniversary: presentations are scheduled for September and November 2024 and February 2025.

Connecting Members:

- ❖ Increase opportunities for members to connect in person: hosted a “watch party” at the City of Ottawa Archives for the February 2024 meeting; encouraged attendance at monthly meetings.

- ❖ Consult members to assess demographic changes, preferences for programming, awards, etc.: survey completed in April.
- ❖ Celebrate our 30th anniversary, June 2024 to June 2025: article on past 30 years written for ACR; program to be launched at the AGM in June 2024.

Website:

- ❖ Ascertain if, and how, members use the website and solicit ideas for improvement: the member survey offered indication of how members use the website, and how frequently.
- ❖ Develop website design and implementation guidelines: completed; used immediately for the 30th anniversary web page.

Capacity to deliver goals:

- ❖ Increase Board training and orientation: new Treasurer was briefed on programs, protocols and procedures and shadowed the outgoing Treasurer for three months.
- ❖ Entice more members, particularly non-members who regularly attend monthly meetings: departing member survey completed in May; some members returned.
- ❖ Reorganize how the Program is determined and delivered: developed an Education Committee; restructured task allocation.
- ❖ Ensure continuation of the Anglo-Celtic Roots (ACR) quarterly journal and its profile: a reminder of each newly published ACR issue is included in the newsletter each quarter; a search has begun for a new managing editor of ACR; the 30th anniversary writing contest was completed in May—winning entries will be featured in future issues of ACR.
- ❖ Recognize volunteer contributions: certificates of recognition awarded; annual report acknowledged contributions.

Board

Our bylaws state that the Society’s Board should comprise “between nine (9) and eleven (11) directors,” including the 10 named directorships—president, past-president, secretary, treasurer, membership, communications, program, education, outreach, and research and projects. This year 10 directors served on the Board. Our monthly discussions covered all range of topics and I valued our collaborative approach.

For 2023-2024 Patricia Grainger stepped into the Outreach Director position. Directors-at-large Susan Smart and Beth Adams took over as Newsletter Editor and Education Program support respectively.

This year the Board says goodbye to Marianne Rasmus who has served her maximum term, first as Treasurer and in recent years as Program Director. We will miss her corporate memory, her dedication to the Society, her thoughtful interventions at meetings and her creativity in building such an excellent program over the past few years. Jennifer Hill, Treasurer, is also leaving the Board. We are grateful for her time and for keeping our books in order, and we are enriched by her contribution to our Board discussions.

In 2024-2025, the Board will have nine directors.

Caroline Smallman has come forward to serve as Treasurer and she has been shadowing Jennifer for several months. Beth Adams moves from director-at-large to the Program Director position. She will have Andy Desjardins to assist her on the Education Committee. We thank him for his help in the 2023-2024 season.

We are still seeking someone to take on the Communication Director's position, and we would like to have an additional director-at-large. If you are interested, please contact Duncan Monkhouse at pastpresident@bifhsgo.ca.

Partnerships

BIFHSGO has two key partnerships.

In line with a long-standing memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Library and Archives Canada, BIFHSGO volunteers index various record sets dealing with British Home Children. The results are used on their website and in our Name Index. Our MOU will be renegotiated this coming year.

We have a working relationship with the City of Ottawa Archives as a result of our library agreement with the Ontario Genealogical Society (Ontario Ancestors), Ottawa Branch, which, in turn, has a formal agreement with the Archives. We are grateful for having therefore been able to use the Archives meeting rooms for planning sessions and a “watch party” in February.

In addition, BIFHSGO is a voting member of the Ottawa Irish Society, and we supported the initiative to commemorate the 360 Irish immigrants who arrived in Ottawa during the Irish Famine, and subsequently died. We are a voting member of Volunteer Ottawa, and we benefitted from several information/education sessions this past year.

We are grateful to Ontario Ancestors for promoting our monthly meetings and annual conference through their weekly newsletter.

Volunteers

We continue to be blessed with a core group of active members who are willing to volunteer to bring to all members the many benefits we have enjoyed over the years. Sometimes that is as simple as helping with logistics at in-person events, or helping to index archival documents for our databases. Many of them are named in the individual director's reports.

Many Society activities require volunteers, with varying time commitments. Please consider joining our team where you will meet friendly people, learn new things, and help your Society continue to thrive. Watch for calls for interest in helping with specific projects or activities.

To those of you who already voluntarily serve our Society, we are immensely grateful for all the time and effort that you contribute. Perhaps you will be inspired to volunteer in some capacity—your contributions can be large or small, every bit helps. Will we find your name included in next year's report?

In Memoriam

This past year we lost valued members who served our organization in a variety of capacities over the years. In Sue Lambeth's Research and Projects report, you will read more about John Sayers, who passed away last summer, his incredible work in establishing and growing the database of British Home Children over the years, and the work to preserve his legacy. We also mark the passing of Jim Neelin, Margaret Caughey and Stuart Tait.

If there are other loyal members, who gave time and dedication to BIFHSGO and about whose passing we are not aware, we thank them.

Directors' Reports

I invite members to read the reports of directors and volunteers in order to get an idea of the range and extent of BIFHSGO's activities and the number of people who offer their time to deliver them. You will sometimes see the same names mentioned in several different capacities, as many of our volunteers serve in double, triple and sometimes quadruple capacities.

Program (Marianne Rasmus)

During the 2023–2024 Program Year, BIFHSGO continued to offer hybrid monthly meetings. For eight of the ten meetings, attendees had the option of attending either in-person or online. During January and February, once again, meetings were online only to avoid possible winter weather disruptions.

The hybrid format allows those who prefer the online format and those living outside the Ottawa area to remain engaged with BIFHSGO's program. While most attendees continue to join the meetings online, a faithful group has gathered each month at Knox Presbyterian Church, in Ottawa's Centretown. As the program year has progressed, the number of in-person attendees has increased.

Last year, energy was focused on learning the hybrid technology and establishing the hybrid system. This year, some procedures were fine-tuned to make the in-person experience more enjoyable. In addition, we are grateful to Knox Presbyterian Church which purchased a larger screen and window coverings for the hall. Both have improved the quality of the visuals in the room.

Thanks goes out to our dedicated team of production volunteers, David Jeanes, Barbara Tose and Ken McKinlay, who ensure that each meeting runs smoothly.

Below is the 2023-2024 Program:

Date	Presentation	Speaker(s)	Title of Webinar(s)	Attendance
SEP 9 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: England & Wales	Total: 118 On-line: 99 In-person: 19 Members: 82 (69%) Non-Members: 36 (31%)
	FEATURE TALK	Paul Cripwell	Locations and Occupations: Using Census Analysis to Explore Family Dispersion	
OCT 14 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: Ireland	Total:152 On-line: 131 In-person: 21 Members: 95 (63%) Non-Members: (37%)
	FEATURE TALK	Nancy Conroy	From Derry to the Pontiac	
NOV 18 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: Military Service	Total:111 On-line: 92 In-person: 19 Members: 89 (80%) Non-Members: 22 (20%)
	FEATURE TALK	Linda Reid (virtually) Susan Davis Sue Lambeth Mary-Lou Simac Barb Tose	We will remember them	
DEC 9 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	Christmas Social			Total: 107 In-person: 33 On-line: 74
	GREAT MOMENTS	Veronica Scrimger	Purleigh's Brick Wall; Discovering the Brotherhood Colony in Purleigh, Essex	
		Nancy Higgins (Virtually)	It Could Have Been a Movie: Charles Roper and His Fiddle	
		Beth Adams	A Bible Hunt, with another stone house at the end	
		Carol Annett	A Connection to Scotland in Italy	
JAN 13, 2024 Virtual 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: Scotland	Total: 154 Members: 91(59%) Non-Members: 63 (41%)
	FEATURE TALK	Robert Urquhart	You've Got Mail: Rent and Associated Agricultural Terminology in Scottish Records, circa 1500-1750/ 10 am	
FEB 10 Virtual 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: Census Records	Total: 225 Members: 126 (56%) Non-members: 99 (44%)
	FEATURE TALK	Dianne M. Rogers	Researching Female Ancestors: What Could They Tell Us?	
MAR 9 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: Civil Birth, Marriage & Death Registrations	Total: 181 Members: 51 % Non-members: 49% In-person: 39 On-line: 142
	FEATURE TALK	Ann Burns	So, who was Jack Hibbard's wife?	
APR 13 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: Church Records	Total: 219 In-person: 50 On-line: 169
	FEATURE TALK	Tim Cook	Vimy: Exploring the Battle and the Legend	

MAY 11 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	EDUCATION TALK	Ken McKinlay	British Isles Back to Basics: Immigration & Emigration	Total: 173 In-person: 30 On-line: 143
	FEATURE TALK	Dena Palamedes	"My Farrell Brick Wall & New Cousins: From Inchigeelagh, Cork to Holytown, Scotland and St Andrew's West, Ontario"	
JUN 8 9 a.m. 10 a.m.	AGM			
		Dianne Brydon	BIFHSGO at 30	
	GREAT MOMENTS	Veronica Scrimger	Just a Wannabe Scot	
		Paul Cripwell	A Cripwell Golden Moment, and What Came Next	
Jim Pot and Jack Hanna (from Knox)		The Story of the Desk		

The hybrid format facilitates flexibility and creativity. Although the recruitment of speakers for monthly meetings has primarily focused on in-person presenters, hybrid sessions allow for speakers to present remotely. This past fall, both the November Military Moments and the December Great Moments included presentations from members living outside the Ottawa area. In addition, the annual Holiday Social in December allowed participation from attendees, both in the hall and on-line. Virtual-only meetings in January and February allowed BIFHSGO to engage excellent speakers from outside of the local area without incurring costly travel expenses. This winter, speakers presented from Scotland (Robert Urquhart) and British Columbia (M. Diane Rogers), and informal, interactive chat sessions involving the speakers and those in attendance followed both meetings.

This season, the monthly Education Sessions featured an eight-part Back-to-Basics series by Ken McKinlay. The sessions have been well received and well attended. A special thank you goes out to Ken for his willingness to take on this momentous task and for all his efforts in presenting interesting and informative sessions each month. They have proven valuable to both the novice and experienced researcher.

In effort to resume some of the pre-COVID social activities of our in-person meetings, refreshments served at the monthly meetings offer opportunity for members to chat over coffee, and a special viewing party for the February virtual meeting at the Tallwood City of Ottawa Archives gave those on the west side of the city a chance to get together.

Meetings have continued to attract a significant number of people from outside the Ottawa area. Attendees have included participants from across North America, and beyond. For the period September 2023 to May 2024, the average monthly attendance was 160; in-person the average was 30, and the online average 137 (includes January and February which were online only).

The honoraria offered to speakers is as follows: hour-long Feature Presentations: \$125; 30-minute Education Sessions: \$75; and Great Moments: \$25 each.

Tasks performed by the Program Director include organizing the monthly program, both education sessions and feature presentations, finding speakers, and attending monthly Board meetings. The Program Director collects presentation abstracts and speakers' biographies, ensures they are posted on the website, and forwards meeting information to

the ACR Editor. In addition, the Program Director communicates with the newsletter editor; coordinates with the Treasurer for payment; liaises with speakers in preparation for their presentations; schedules and facilitates practice run-throughs, as needed; introduces and thanks the speakers at the monthly meetings; prepares thank you letters for the speakers; and has purchased refreshments for the monthly meetings.

In closing, as my time on the BIFHSGO Board ends, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all our members for your support and patience during my tenure as Program Director, and previously as the Society's Treasurer. Your support as we transitioned through the COVID to post-COVID realities has been greatly appreciated.

To all those members who have been willing to share their inspirational stories over this past year, thank you!

Remember, if you have a story to tell, but need assistance in the preparation process, experienced speakers are willing to share their skills and expertise with you. If you have speaker or program suggestions, please forward them to programs@bifhsgo.ca. I am sure that your next Program Director will be most appreciative!

2023 Conference (Dianne Brydon)

The BIFHSGO 2023 virtual annual conference, "Leaving Their Scottish Homes: What Were They Thinking," was held on 28–29 October 2023. The program theme was selected based on the standard BIFHSGO rotation of conference topics of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Two conference days were scheduled on a weekend. Four presentations were offered on Day One, followed by a social time. A "Conference Connect with Scottish Regions" began Day Two, featuring a Q and A in breakout rooms with family historians, genealogists and archivists from around Scotland. Videos of the presentations (and handouts, when available) were made available to registrants until 30 November 2023.

Paid registrants numbered 236, with 10 registering during, or after the conference in order to watch the videos. BIFHSGO realized a profit of \$4,655.

A survey conducted following the Conference received a 30 per cent response rate, providing valuable input that has helped us plan the 2024 Conference. Of note, 91 per cent said the length of the conference was "just right"; and preference for in-person or virtual format yielded the following: virtual 83 per cent, in-person 33 per cent, and 48 per cent preferred a format that combined components of in-person and virtual sessions.

A total of 24 volunteers worked to deliver the Conference, from initial planning at the beginning until the survey was complete and the final report submitted. I am deeply grateful for the time the following people contributed between January and November: Ted Buglas, Ann Burns, Bob Butler, Pam Cooper, Sheila Dohoo Faure, Thierry Faure, Trish Grainger, Jennifer Hill, David Jeanes, Jean Kitchen, Duncan Monkhouse, Georgia Roberts, Barbara Tose, Russell Wilkins, Susan Wright; host and facilitator Marianne Rasmus, and facilitators Beth Adams, Anne Coulter, Laurie Dougherty, Andrea Harding, Mary Anne Sharpe and Lynne Willoughby.

Membership (Anne Coulter)

Membership numbers for 2024 up to 28 April 2024 are:

	2022	2023	2024	Difference from 2023
Memberships by type				
Individual	337	309	307	-2
Family	47	25	20	-5
Organization	7	5	1	-4
Lifetime	6	7	8	1
Total Members	397	346	336	-10
# members Ottawa	230	198	201	3
# members outside Ottawa	90	78	91	13
# members outside Canada	17	17	15	-2

% individual members Ottawa	68%	64%	65%
% individual members outside Ottawa in Canada	27%	25%	30%
% individual members outside Canada.	5%	6%	5%

The number of individual memberships in 2024 is stable and about the same as in 2023. About 56 members from 2023 did not renew for 2024. The percentage of members from outside the Ottawa area is slightly higher than it was in 2023. New and returning members (those who rejoined after a break away) was much higher than in 2023 (54 compared to 18). Of those new members 33 were from outside the Ottawa area. About 23 of the new members joined the Society during the Conference at the end of October 2023, when a discounted membership fee was offered.

This year we sent an email to those who had not renewed telling them we missed them and asking them to fill out a survey telling us why. Some simply forgot and renewed upon receiving the email. Some told us they had completed their UK family history research, or had come to a point in their life where they could not participate any longer.

Membership fees did not change for 2024. The majority of people paid by PayPal (80%), followed by eTransfer (17%) and cheque (3%).

The number of members opting to receive a paper copy of the *Anglo-Celtic Roots* journal with their membership, rather than the on-line version, decreased from 37% in 2023 to 27% in 2024.

Communications

This year, a communications committee consisting of the Social Media Coordinator, Newsletter Editor, Web Manager and Outreach Director met monthly to plan the communications calendar. This has ensured timely and cohesive messaging concerning BIFHSGO's many activities.

In the recent survey, members provided valuable feedback on the effectiveness of BIFHSGO's various communication activities.

Website (Sheila Dohoo Faure)

The website is our central communications hub. All BIFHSGO products and activities are hosted there and all email messages to members link back to the website content. Information about events, monthly meeting announcements, notable news, videos, newsletters and the *Anglo-Celtic Roots* (ACR) quarterly journal was updated and posted regularly.

Highlights of the past year's website include:

- ❖ Continuation of the regular feature "Behind the News" page to promote content on the web site
- ❖ Publication of searchable indexes of issues of ACR and video presentations
- ❖ Preparation and management of the 2023 Conference pages and registration system
- ❖ Setting up and managing the 2024 membership accounts
- ❖ Managing the recovery of membership accounts after a computer system failure
- ❖ Development of Website Design and Implementation Guidelines for Board approval
- ❖ Preparation for the 30th anniversary year activities.

Newsletter (Susan Smart)

I took on the role of editor of BIFHSGO's monthly newsletter with the first issue in mid-summer 2023. The Board has decided to limit content to BIFHSGO activities and this year we expanded it to include more outreach. The newsletter is e-mailed to the membership and to non-members who have asked to be on the distribution list.

Regular Communications with Members (Duncan Monkhouse)

Each month about two weeks before the upcoming monthly meeting members receive an invitation, and then a newsletter just days before the meeting. Several messages are sent before the conference, and in the period preceding membership renewal time. These mass mailings are sent through our Mailchimp account to members and to non-members who have asked to be on our mailing list. In some months, additional messages are sent to our members, such as the annual call for nominations to the Hall of Fame and official notice of the AGM. The members' survey tells us the monthly newsletter and email notices are very useful.

Social Media (Dianne Brydon)

The Society's president currently looks after the social media accounts. Information about BIFHSGO monthly and SIG meetings is posted each month and posts from other family history/genealogy/local history societies that are deemed of interest to our members are shared. There was significant activity leading up to the 2023 Conference and afterward to promote the opportunity to watch videos of conference presentations. We were fortunate that many groups and bloggers re-shared the conference posts and continue to "like" and "share" our content.

Outreach (Patricia Grainger)

Outreach activities resumed in earnest in 2023–24 after a lull during the past few years, partially because events of this type could not be held during COVID. Even after the risk of infection from COVID subsided somewhat, people hesitated to join group activities in person.

Three main outreach activities were identified for the 2023–24 year. The first one, participation in the Irish Society parade, ultimately did not take place. The parade was cancelled by the organizers in the week prior.

BIFHSGO did take part in two other outreach activities in 2024. The first was on February 20th at the annual Heritage Day event at Ottawa City Hall. BIFHSGO had a table from which brochures and information about our website and upcoming meetings was distributed. About 25 people came to the BIFHSGO table, some of whom had heard of our Society; others had not and were interested to learn more.

The second outreach activity was our involvement in the 2024 Regional Heritage Fair held at the Museum of History on 24 April 2024. The Fair is held annually to encourage students from grades 4 to 10 to research a topic of interest from Canadian history, heritage or culture. Once again, BIFHSGO was given a table where three of our members spoke with the more than 30 people who stopped by. Many of these spoke about their own family history and inquired about genealogy in general and ways in which BIFHSGO could support their research.

At the table, a PowerPoint presentation about BIFHSGO and genealogy ran throughout the day. Both English and French versions of the BIFHSGO brochure and other related documentation were distributed. The students we met were all enthusiastic about their projects and talked to us about them. This gave us the opportunity to tell them a little about family history research and BIFHSGO as well. We have been invited to participate in the Fair again next year.

Sue Lambeth highlighted BIFHSGO resources and programs in a FastTracks session during the OGS *Diversity in Genealogy* virtual Conference (10 September 2023), and represented BIFHSGO at the Loyalist Day Flag Raising Ceremony at City Hall on 19 June 2023.

BIFHSGO has reserved a table in the marketplace at the Ontario Ancestors Conference being held in June in Toronto. In addition to raising awareness of BIFHSGO and its events and resources, volunteers will promote our Society's fall virtual conference.

Work has begun on building connections with other family history societies which are also primarily interested in British Isles ancestry—both those who lived there and those who emigrated. BIFHSGO is represented in the resource fair at the bi-monthly Scottish Indexes conferences and will be at the June 2024 Ontario Ancestors Conference. Although the Society was not represented at the last Family History Federation's Really Useful Show, steps are being taken to participate in the next one.

The Outreach Director will be participating as a member of the fall Conference Planning team and will be looking for opportunities to build other community connections in the coming year.

Research and Projects (Sue Lambeth)

When John Sayers stepped down as leader of BIFHSGO's Home Children projects last year, he ensured that all of his electronic and paper records were properly transferred to the Society. John led our indexing research projects for over 25 years, and during that time he carefully collected information on each initiative, ensuring that documentation would not be lost but would serve as an important foundation for future research projects.

Last summer an arrangement was made with the City of Ottawa Archives, through Grace Lewis (OGS-Ottawa Branch Librarian), for BIFHSGO to store 26 boxes of John Sayers' paper files and publications while this material is inventoried and analyzed. In addition to providing free storage for this collection in the Tallwood building, the City Archives agreed to provide a free workspace in their Reference Room for our volunteers so that an inventory of the Sayers' material could be prepared. The inventory project started in the fall 2023 and is ongoing. Volunteers who are actively working on this initiative include Kirsten Perreault (query files and death records), Anita Nevins (publications) and Brian LeConte (master list of files). In conjunction with other indexing work, Sally Doherty also joined this project as a volunteer in spring 2024.

In addition to paper files and related materials, John Sayers also transferred over 150 electronic spreadsheets with descriptive data that contains information on the names of over 9,000 British home children. This data was transcribed from microfilmed Library and Archives Canada (LAC) immigration records held in Record Group 76. John Sayers started this project six years ago, and it is still ongoing.

Our volunteers prepare transcriptions according to the requirements of a longstanding memorandum of understanding that BIFHSGO has with LAC. Before this data can be published, it needs to be verified and this difficult work is being done by Trisha Stewart. Other volunteers who have given many hours this year to continue transcribing newly assigned records include Susan Baumann, Susan Smart and Paul Cripwell. Paul has also drafted a mapping of British home children emigration agencies and organizations based on LAC's Guide. BIFHSGO's Web Manager is currently developing plans to publish this data in our Name Index in 2024; discussions are also underway with LAC staff to advance inclusion of this data in the national LAC database.

Support has been provided to Patricia Roberts-Pichette for the publication of her Research Guide to the Name and Reference Index of the Children's (Middlemore) Emigration Homes

and Its Sources, and corrections have also been made to BIFHSGO's Name Index at her request.

BIFHSGO's Web Manager assisted with a review of the databases available to the public through our Name Index. John Reid, Glenn Wright and John McConkey also provided helpful input for the review, which examined the origin of each database, its format and content. Several technical issues related to database searches and reporting were also identified. As a result, the Web Manager has planned for adjustments and improvements to be made.

BIFHSGO has continued to provide funds to the Ottawa Public Library and to the OGS-Ottawa Branch library for the acquisition of books and materials. Grace Lewis (Librarian), assisted by BIFHSGO's Pam Cooper, has continued to provide information on holdings to our members throughout the year. A subscription to the British Newspaper Archive (BNA) is available free of charge to the public in the Ottawa City Archives Reference Room. The City of Ottawa provided a new computer for this access in January.

In 2006, approximately 10 BIFHSGO members were interviewed by Carleton University students as part of an oral history project. Recently, Sophia Foglia (student volunteer) was able to obtain valuable contact information about these recordings. In February, the original tapes were found uncatalogued in storage at LAC. They are currently being processed and hopefully will be available in the coming months.

Two research procedural guides were approved by the Board this year: the Revised Policy for BIFHSGO's Research Projects and BIFHSGO's Project Proposal Template. BIFHSGO's Land Acknowledgement was also drafted, discussed and approved by the Board. It is now published on the website and on the rolling screen at monthly meetings.

Planning is underway to support BIFHSGO's 30th Anniversary initiatives and, with this in mind, the Director's Research and Projects Activity Plan for 2024/25 was tabled at the March Board meeting. The plan provides an overview of anticipated activities, timelines and tasks for the coming year. The budget to publish the new database on British Home Children and to make other corrections and adjustments to the Name Index was presented to the Board with the Research Activity Plan and it was approved.

***Anglo-Celtic Roots* (Barbara Tose, Managing Editor)**

BIFHSGO's quarterly journal publishes articles written by our members about many aspects of their family histories and their research. In the past year, eight articles appeared from seven authors. Time periods covered ranged from the late 1700s to post-WW II. We met characters and heroes, learned of struggles for a better life through relocation and trade unionism, and traveled around the world in the process. Most of our authors were well-known to readers of *Anglo-Celtic Roots* (ACR). This year we welcomed a new writer, Veronica Scrimger, with an interesting tale about her great-grandfather. Thank you to the authors who submitted their items for publication last year. We always welcome articles from any of our members.

For several years now we have also been publishing biographies (one per quarter) of those individuals who died at the No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station during World War I. These articles are written by a small group of volunteers who research and compile the

biographies so that these people will not be forgotten. Last year our soldiers' biographies were written by Heather Carmody, Nigel Lloyd, Marcia Clements and Sheila Dohoo Faure, who, along with her many other duties for BIFHSGO, leads this tiny band of writers and chooses which biographies will appear in ACR.

Members have the choice to receive a printed version of ACR or to read it online. Issues from 1995 to the present are available in full to members on our web site. Non-members have access to complete issues up to 2019 and the list of contents for 2020–2023. According to the membership report, 63 percent of members now receive the quarterly journal only electronically.

Each year a panel of judges reviews the articles published during the calendar year and determines which author will be awarded “Best ACR Article by a Member.” The winner for 2023 will be announced at the June AGM. My thanks to those members who agreed to act as judges this year.

As Managing Editor, I rely on several people in the production of the journal. In particular, I would like to thank Christine Jackson, who not only writes stories for ACR but also assists me with editing and other production tasks. Jean Kitchen also edits from time to time and joins Sheila Dohoo Faure, Marnie McCall and Christine Jackson as my regular proofreaders who catch my mistakes before going to print. I would like to thank Anne Renwick who, after many years as a proofreader, resigned at the end of 2023. Ann Burns takes care of mailing copies to our U.S. and international members. John Reid continues to contribute material to support ACR and our members with his regular column, “Cream of the Crop,” although he has informed me that this will likely be his last year as a regular contributor. Many thanks to all who have assisted me in the past year.

However, it would all be pointless without the members who faithfully read—and, hopefully, enjoy—the journal every quarter. Thank you for your continued support.

Secretary (Laurie Dougherty)

In June 2023, I took over the position of Secretary from Gillian Leitch who served the Board in that capacity for eight years. I wish to thank Gillian for providing assistance as I settled into my role as Secretary. One of my first responsibilities was to take minutes at a Board of Management planning session in July. From that initial session, the framework for a Strategic Plan 2024–2026 was constructed and, between September and May, was further developed into an Operational Plan. At that meeting, the Board decided to no longer offer a Speakers Bureau to outside organizations due to a lack of interest. Thank you to all the speakers who have offered their services to the Bureau in the past.

Organizing the awards for Best Feature Presentation, Best Great Moment, Best Education Talk and the BIFHSGO Hall of Fame are the responsibility of the Secretary. I spent a considerable amount of time and energy this year learning how to provide communications to the membership about the awards as well as evaluating and improving the voting process for the Best Feature and Best Great Moment presentations. The Board will discuss the future of these awards based on input from the members provided in the 2024 Membership Survey.

Each month, I provide the agenda, minutes and action items to the Board and have regularly distributed emails from various other family history and heritage organizations. In May, I filed our annual report to Corporations Canada and provided an updated list of Board Directors for their records. In preparation for this AGM in June, I prepared notices and documents for the website to help the membership understand the work of the Board of Directors and other key volunteers.

It has been a pleasure to learn more about BIFHSGO and work with the talented and incredibly dedicated Board of Directors over the year. I look forward to serving the rest of my term as Secretary until June 2025.

Treasurer (Jennifer Hill)

The 2023–2024 year has been a busy one, filled with the usual banking activities and a few other projects.

Regular activities:

- ❖ Accept payments (membership and conference fees) made via PayPal, e-transfer and cheques, and deposit them to the bank. Record on BIFHSGO's QuickBooks banking software.
- ❖ Prepare cheques to organizations providing goods and services to BIFHSGO and to reimburse Board members for their payments made on behalf of BIFHISGO. Record the cheques on BIFHSGO's QuickBooks accounting software.
- ❖ Prepare monthly financial reports for the Board.
- ❖ Prepare tax receipts for people who donated to BIFHSGO.
- ❖ Prepare a draft 2024–2025 budget for review and additional input from the Board. The current budget was approved at the March 2024 Board meeting.
- ❖ Liaise with McCay Duff accountants throughout their annual review of BIFHSGO's books.

Other initiatives:

- ❖ Participated in discussion about donations to other organizations, which resulted in discussions about our disbursement quota.
- ❖ Developed a list of BIFHSGO non-depreciable assets with the help of the incoming Treasurer.
- ❖ With BIFHSGO's President, met with our bank representative to discuss items such as our account requirements and our investments.
- ❖ Reviewed BIFHSGO's e-transfer process and contributed to a discussion of ways to speed it up, which is particularly important during busy times such as the conference and membership renewal time. Pending a discussion with our bank representative, the hope is to have auto-deposit when people make their payment.
- ❖ Thanked donors to the Society and secured their permission to acknowledge them publicly in hopes of encouraging others.
- ❖ Acted as Conference Treasurer and issued PayPal payments or bank drafts to speakers.
- ❖ Participated in strategic planning sessions.