



# Anglo-Celtic Roots

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## *Anglo-Celtic Roots*

This journal is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa and sent free to members.

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*The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa acknowledges that its activities take place in the ancestral homeland of Indigenous peoples who have inhabited these lands for millennia. We acknowledge the enduring presence here of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. We recognize the importance of bringing awareness and understanding of our diverse nation's past to all, and we promote research and education programs that bring us together as Canadians.*

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**Cover Illustration:**  
**Annie Kerr Strachan, c. 1888.**  
Source: Author's collection.

## **From the Editor:**

We begin this issue with our first-place winner of BIFHSGO's 30th anniversary writing competition, Claire Callender, and her story of five sisters from Fyvie, Scotland. Claire impressed our judges with her research and excellent writing and we are presenting it to you with only minor editing. (For a list of the other winners, see page 27.)

Dianne Brydon brings us an update on the 1823 letter written by her 4x great-grandmother, Margaret Anderson. Not only has Dianne now seen the original but she also has one special new cousin.

Andy Desjardins is a new writer to ACR. In this issue he brings us the story of his mother-in-law, Margaret Taylor Hannan Deschamps, a Scottish war bride, and the legacy she has left in Canada.

Marcia Clement brings us the unusual story from No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station of Private John McAuley who, though listed among the dead at the Station, lived until 1958.

Barbara Tose



## From the President



This summer has been full of family history activity:

In June, I visited Pennsylvania to learn more about my Mennonite

ancestors' lives before they left for Canada in 1800 (and eventually converted to Methodism). My sister, who married a Mennonite before she became aware of her own Mennonite heritage, avidly tracked my discoveries on *Facebook* with her husband and mother-in-law.

Then in July, many of my first, second and third cousins gathered in Prince Edward Island as we took my aunt "home" one final time, to her resting place in New Glasgow. I took along albums of family photos stretching back to the 1870s and regaled my relatives with stories as I led them on a tour of places where our Irish, Scottish and English ancestors landed, farmed and were buried.

Now turning to my Irish family history, I am finalizing research plans for a trip to Ireland in October. Two cousins are unearthing possible leads for me to follow up.

And my sister and her husband declared a desire to visit our ancestral farms in Scotland (perhaps that Pennsylvania trip piqued their interest?), so we'll fit in that tour together before I head to Ireland.

In short, the time for solitary research and discovery seems to be over. I'm happy that my relatives are more and

more engaged in my quest and that they want to learn about my findings.

Many BIFHSGO volunteers have been active too this summer:

The Board held a planning session at the end of July. Those of you who answered the recent member survey were there in spirit, as we used your feedback to guide our deliberations.

The conference planning team finalized details for the October program and prepared to open registration in September. Our social media posts about the upcoming conference speakers and their topics have received enthusiastic feedback.

The team coordinating the 30th anniversary writing contest compiled the judges' results and readied the winning entry for publication in this issue of *Anglo-Celtic Roots*.

And individual board members, assisted by our ex-officio web manager and other loyal volunteers, are working hard to ensure all is ready to start BIFHSGO's 30th season of activities this month.

So many members are active in family history endeavours, both personally and with our society—that's what makes it fun! And I look forward to seeing many of you over the next few months, as we start to celebrate 30 years of undoubted and exciting progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dianne Brydon'.

Dianne Brydon

## Family History Research

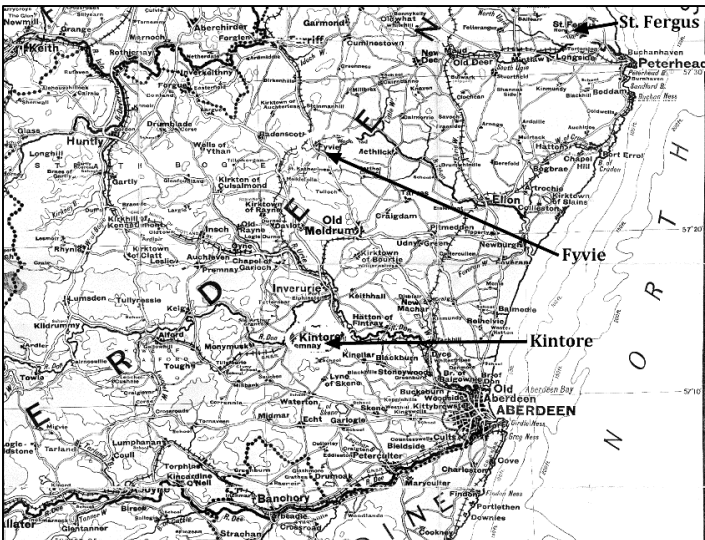
# The Misses Strachan of Fyvie

BY CLAIRE CALLENDER



*Claire Callender is the first-place winner of BIFHSGO's 30th Anniversary Writing Competition. A scientist in a former life, Claire is now a family historian, researcher and writer. She has researched and written about several branches of her own family and loves helping others with their genealogy research. Most of her ancestors were Scots from Aberdeenshire, Stirlingshire and Ayrshire, but her genealogical journeys have also led her to connections in the US, Canada and Australia, and links with plantation slavery in the Caribbean.*

**O**n Tuesday, 19 January 1909 it was “ladies’ night” at the Mutual Improvement Association in Kintore, a village near Aberdeen in northeast Scotland. My great-grand-aunt Christina Strachan chaired the meeting and gave a paper entitled “Women in Aberdeen during the past four centuries.” She quoted “several extracts from council records and old newspapers, some of which were of intense local interest.”

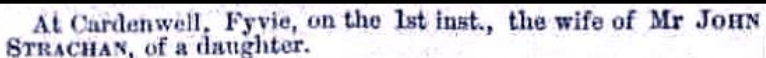


**Figure 1:** Aberdeenshire showing Kintore, Fyvie, St. Fergus and other places in this story. Map is Counties of Aberdeen, Banff, Moray, London: McDougalls Educational Co., 1930. Source: National Library of Scotland. Reproduced with permission.

When I came across this little slice of Aberdeenshire life reported in the *Aberdeen Press*

*and Journal*,<sup>1</sup> I was busy with what I called my “Five Lassies fae Fyvie” project—researching the lives of Christina Strachan and her four sisters. Christina was the youngest of nine Strachan siblings; their parents John (1822–92) and Christian (1832–1908) were the third generation of Strachan tenant farmers at Cardenwell farm in Fyvie. The Strachans were well-known in the community and were deeply involved in the local Free Church. Two of Christina’s brothers, James and Robert, graduated from Aberdeen University and became Free Church ministers and professors in religious colleges of further education. Eldest brother John was a church elder and sat on the parish council and the school board. He took over the farm tenancy after the death of their father in 1892, retiring as the last of the Cardenwell Strachan farmers in 1923.<sup>2</sup> Researching the family over the years, I easily found evidence of the achievements of the Strachan men, but details of the lives of Christina and her four sisters were more elusive. I wanted to give the sisters an equal place in my family story.

As I sat at my computer accessing all kinds of online resources to trace the lives of my Aberdeenshire women, I thought of Christina, more than a century ago, poring over dusty newspapers and council records to prepare her presentation. She must have noticed, as I had, that even into the 20th century women seemed to disappear into the social fabric. They were daughters, wives, mothers or spinsters, earning a mention in the local newspaper only if they broke the law or participated in community or church events. They gave birth to children that were reported only as a son or daughter of a father.<sup>3</sup>



At Cardenwell, Fyvie, on the 1st inst., the wife of Mr JOHN STRACHAN, of a daughter.

**Figure 2: Birth notice for Christina Strachan, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 7 July 1875.**

Source: britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk. Copyright British Library Board. Used with permission.

Indeed, it was a rare find that allowed me to identify Christina as the chair of ladies’ night—mostly I chased a multitude of mentions of “Miss Strachan” through various local newspapers, struggling to confirm family ties and distinguish the Strachan sisters from one another.

Mutual improvement associations were found in many small communities at the time.<sup>4</sup> They were informal groups who met to share information and debate topics of the day—politics, literature, religion or general knowledge—at a time when educational opportunities were limited for many. They were often associated with religious controversy and liberal thinking, so it was fitting to find an educated young woman from a Fyvie

farming family with strong connections to the Free Church chairing ladies' night, and a good place to begin this story.

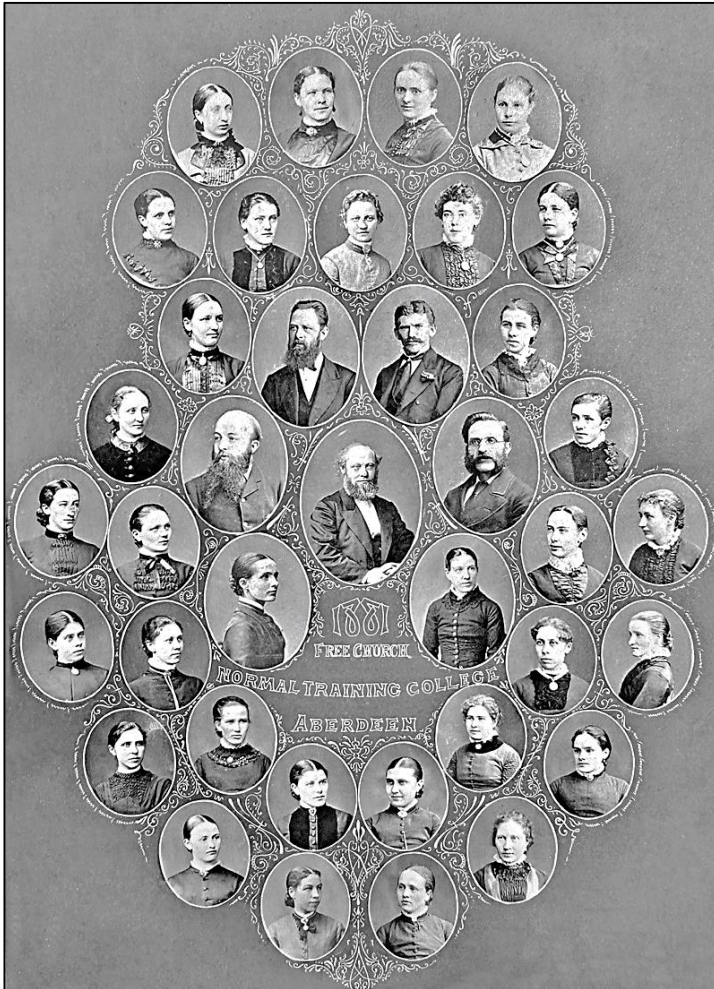
What would Christina have found in the Aberdeen council records and old newspapers going back four centuries? Perhaps she started with the "witchcraze" in the late 16th and early 17th centuries,<sup>5</sup> regaling her audience with grand descriptions of witches escaping imprisonment, or the strangulation and burning of those found guilty of "convening with the devil." Looking into women's lives in the 18th century she may have consulted the *Enactment Books* (minutes of Aberdeen town council)<sup>6</sup> and found slightly more modern drama in women being banished from the burgh for keeping loose and disorderly company.<sup>7</sup> She may have talked of the "Damn' Rebel Bitches"<sup>8</sup> who supported the Jacobite rebellion in 1745, perhaps even mentioning a Margaret Strachan from Aberdeenshire, one of the "Whitehaven Three" who escaped after being captured when the rebels occupied Carlisle. For the 19th century, her theme of women and bad behaviour likely continued, as newspapers of the day still often only featured crime and punishment or trivial domestic aspects of women's lives. Her talk may have featured Kate Humphrey, who in 1830 murdered her sleeping husband and was the last woman to be hanged in Aberdeen.<sup>9</sup> Getting to the later decades of the 19th century, Christina may have been able to put a more positive spin on women's lives, when opportunities to train to be nurses or teachers were becoming more common. In the 1890s, Scottish universities, including Aberdeen, opened their doors to women, and I am sure she was proud to include in her presentation a mention of her sister Elizabeth, who was one of the first four women to graduate from Aberdeen University in 1898.

Christina Strachan was 33 years old and a teacher at Leylodge School in Kintore when she gave this presentation. Ending her talk with "modern times," perhaps she reflected that she and her sisters represented the changing times of the first decade of the 20th century. Women were no longer to be only wives, mothers, or spinsters working as domestic servants; they could also choose to go to university, train as teachers and participate intellectually in society. This is the story of five Misses Strachan—Margaret, Annie, Mary, Elizabeth and Christina—accomplished women, contributing members of society and each remarkable in her own right.

### **Margaret Strachan (1861–1925)—*Responsible elder***

Margaret was the second of the Strachan children and the oldest sister. She and two of her sisters became teachers, but they each had a different path to qualification, reflecting the changes in education that were rapidly occurring

in Scotland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Margaret trained within the first decade of the secular compulsory education system that came into effect with the 1872 *Education (Scotland) Act*, and before women were admitted to Aberdeen University. She first served an apprenticeship as a pupil teacher at Fyvie Female School, before taking the entrance exam for Aberdeen Free Church Training College in 1879.<sup>10</sup> The college, also known as the Normal School, had opened in 1875, as both the Free and Presbyterian churches tried to retain some control of the religious aspects of teacher



**Figure 3: Class photo from Free Church Normal Training College, Aberdeen, 1881.**  
Source: Photograph album of faculty and students of the Free Church Training College in Aberdeen, Scotland (Collection 94/85). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA. Used with permission.



training in the new system.<sup>11</sup> She passed first class, which granted her entrance to the college and possibly a small bursary. She left Fyvie at the age of 19 and went to live as a lodger in Old Machar Parish in Aberdeen,<sup>12</sup> close to the training college. Figure 3 is a group photo from the college in 1881, showing 33 women students and five male faculty. No names are given but Margaret is likely among them—I can only amuse myself looking for family resemblances. After qualifying she taught in Newcastle upon Tyne for a period, before returning to Fyvie in 1885 to take up a post at Meiklefolla School.<sup>13</sup> By 1901<sup>14</sup> she was living at the schoolhouse in Keithhall, teaching at the public school, then in 1903 she was appointed as a teacher at Leylodge School in Kintore. She later became headmistress there, a position she held until her retirement in 1923.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 4:**  
**Leylodge**  
**Schoolhouse**  
**where Margaret**  
**Strachan lived**  
**for many years.**  
Source: ©  
Andrew Wood.  
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Margaret’s teaching career spanned more than 40 years, from a time when “school boards had an aversion to appointing women even to headships of small schools, and the average female salary was scarcely more than half that of the male,”<sup>16</sup> to reigning as headmistress of a school for several years. She never married. After retirement she lived at the home of her brother John, who had by then retired from Cardenwell Farm. His will, dated 1823, left provisions for Margaret to continue living there, but she predeceased him in 1925 at the age of 64.<sup>17</sup> In her own will, made the year before her death,<sup>18</sup> she left small legacies to each of her surviving brothers and to her married sister Mary, and small sums to four nieces. Everything else went to her as yet unmarried sister Elizabeth, with instructions to share personal items with Mary. Ever the senior and supportive sister, she clearly wanted to ensure that the women in the family were taken care of.

## Annie Kerr Strachan (1868–1909)—*Lost to the family*

Unlike several of her siblings, Annie, my great-grandmother, was rarely mentioned in local newspapers. I know little of her early life, except that she was musical. Passed down to my granny, my mother and then to me is Annie's bound book of sheet music for piano and singing, with pieces in it dating back to her childhood and originating from music dealers in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, London and Newcastle, probably brought back from the travels of her brothers and sisters. At the age of 20, Annie married Gavin Catto, farmer, at neighbouring Lendrum, Monquitter, on 5 June 1889.<sup>19</sup> They had only been married 18 months when Gavin died suddenly<sup>20</sup> in December 1890 of "abscess of brain, 3 days." After his death, Annie lived for a time with

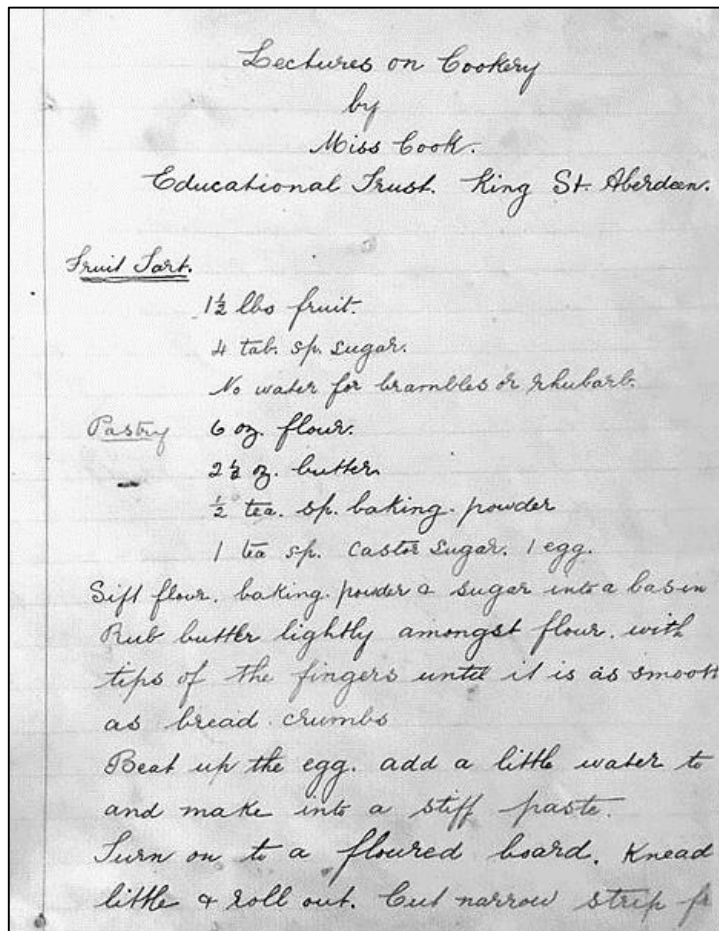


Figure 5: First page of Annie Strachan's notebook from the School of Domestic Economy. Source: Author's collection.

her brother James, who was the Free Church minister in St. Fergus. The 1891 Census<sup>21</sup> lists Annie and her sisters Margaret and Christina living at the St. Fergus manse; Margaret is listed as “housekeeper” and Annie and Christina as “farmer” and “scholar” respectively. I like to think that this was a gathering of the sisters to support newly widowed Annie.

In 1892, their father John Strachan died and Annie returned to Fyvie. Widowed and without an income, she enrolled in the School of Domestic Economy, which had opened in 1891 in Aberdeen.<sup>22</sup> Annie’s notebook from that time, shown in Figure 5, and class timetables<sup>23</sup> indicated that she attended as a part-time student sometime between 1894 and 1897. Her goal was probably to find employment as a cook or domestic servant, or perhaps as a teacher of “the science of domestic economy.” According to her notebook she learned to cook a wide variety of meat, puddings and good Scots fare during her time there, but she never applied her skills to paid employment as she married Adam Logan, my great-grandfather, in 1897.<sup>24</sup> He was 20 years her senior, an itinerant farm worker, recently widowed and the father of six children. Annie quickly became pregnant, and she and Adam left Fyvie, spending several years moving around the U.K. to wherever Adam could find work as a dairyman.<sup>25</sup> The Strachans were clear in their disapproval. Annie died in 1909 at the age of 42, shortly after giving birth to her 8th child;<sup>26</sup> after her death her siblings had no further contact with her husband and children. Lost to the Strachans, she lived on in the Logan family as a beautiful mythical figure, talked about rather sadly by my grandmother, who was only 3 when Annie died.

### **Mary Manson Strachan (1870–1947)—*Married with children***

Mary was perhaps the most conventional of the sisters. She lived and worked at Cardenwell Farm until well into her twenties, then spent some time as housekeeper to her brother James when he was the Free Church minister in St. Fergus.<sup>27</sup> At the age of 30 she married William Riddoch, a travelling salesman from Keith.<sup>28</sup> A photo of their wedding can be seen at Fyvie Heritage.<sup>29</sup> Mary and William lived the rest of their lives at 38 Thomson Street in Aberdeen, raising four children. One daughter, Jeannie, followed in the footsteps of her aunt Lizzie, graduating in 1933 from Aberdeen University and becoming a teacher.<sup>30</sup> Neither Jeannie nor her sister Margaret married—they lived together in Aberdeen in a house owned by Jeannie. Mary died there in 1947.<sup>31</sup>

### **Elizabeth Stephen Strachan (1873–1952)—*Clever and arty***

Elizabeth, known as Lizzie, attended Fyvie Female School in her early years, then in 1886 she was awarded the Mather Bursary,<sup>32</sup> which allowed her to



**Figure 6: 1920s postcard of Thomson Street, Aberdeen.**

Source: Aberdeen history and photos from the past, Facebook.

announcing the bursaries that year, the university principal noted “the remarkable phenomenon of a number of ladies who have found their way amongst us in a way which should make the young gentlemen look to their laurels.”<sup>36</sup> Perhaps not satisfied with her placing, Lizzie declined the bursary and took the exam again the following year. This time she placed 62nd and was awarded a bursary of £15 (worth ~£1700 today).<sup>37</sup> Lizzie graduated with a Master of Arts (MA) degree from Aberdeen University in 1898, one of four female graduates “capped” for the first time in the University’s history.<sup>38</sup>

By 1895 the Scottish universities included education courses in the curriculum, so, with art college credentials and an MA degree<sup>39</sup> under her belt, Lizzie was qualified to teach art and languages without going to training college as her sister Margaret had done. But like Margaret, she moved several times for teaching opportunities. Her first appointment after graduation was as teacher of modern languages at Rothesay Academy.<sup>40</sup> From 1900 to 1901 she was teaching in Invergordon<sup>41</sup> and then she spent some time living in London,<sup>42</sup> possibly with her brother James who was minister at Belgrave Presbyterian Church.<sup>43</sup> By 1909 she had taken a post as a teacher of drawing at Kirkwall Burgh Public School in Orkney. She stayed there little more than a year, returning closer to home to teach art in Kirriemuir in 1911.<sup>44</sup> During the First World War she was recognized for her efforts in raising funds for the Red Cross in Banff, where she was probably living and working.<sup>45</sup> In the 1920s she was employed by the Aberdeenshire Education Authority but the details of the schools she taught at remain elusive, despite several searches of teacher records<sup>46</sup> and newspapers.

attend Albyn School, a private all-girls school in Aberdeen. By 1891 she was living as a boarder with a family in Aberdeen<sup>33</sup> and studying at Gray’s School of Art. Consistently a high achiever, she won various awards for her artwork there.<sup>34,35</sup> In 1894 she placed 81st in the Aberdeen University bursary competition. In



**Figure 7: Aberdeen Journal, 2 April 1898.**

Source: britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.  
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The 1921 Census lists her living back at Cardenwell with her brother John and his wife, perhaps taking a summer break from teaching.

In 1928, aged 53, she married James Cardno,<sup>47</sup> a farmer from St. Fergus whose first wife, also a teacher and graduate of Aberdeen University, and possibly a friend of Lizzie's, had died in 1927.<sup>48</sup> Lizzie died in Aberdeen in 1952, the last of the Cardenwell Strachans.<sup>49</sup>

### **Christina Ann Nicol Strachan (1875–1917)—Almost had it all**

Christina also trained as a teacher. By the time she left school, the universities were playing an increasing role in teacher training, but the Free Church was vigorously opposing the changes, particularly the new Queen's Studentship scheme, which was directing the top students away from the church-controlled training colleges and into universities.<sup>50</sup> Family pressure may have influenced Christina, who chose not to follow Lizzie to university. In 1896 she took first place in the entrance exam for the Free Church Training College in Aberdeen<sup>51</sup> and was awarded a bursary of £18. The previous year, she had also won a top prize from the Donaldson Prize Fund for Pupil Teachers, which encouraged teachers to be qualified in religious education, and liberally bestowed prizes on mostly young women.<sup>52</sup> She was a pupil teacher at York Street School in Aberdeen while at college, then after completing the two-year curriculum she took a post in Helmsdale, a small northern village in Sutherland.<sup>53</sup> In 1900 she was appointed as an assistant teacher at Hermitage School in Helensburgh. She reportedly had "excellent

testimonials” and was “an able and energetic teacher.”<sup>54</sup> By 1908 Christina was an assistant teacher at Leylodge School in Kintore, living with her sister Margaret who was headmistress there.<sup>55</sup> She was an active participant in the Mutual Improvement Association, regularly presenting papers on a variety of topics. I was mildly shocked when I discovered that in 1910 she participated in an inter-society debate on “Votes for Women.”<sup>56</sup> She supported the negative side, arguing that the “admission of woman into political life would militate against her success in her true and natural sphere—the home,” adding that “the interests of women are today well looked after by men.” The case against granting the franchise to women prevailed by 34 votes to 30. Dissonant indeed, but I decided to believe that she was honing her debating skills rather than presenting her own views!

In 1916, at the age of 40, she married George Anderson,<sup>57</sup> a farmer from the Kintore area. In February 1917 she died in a drowning accident<sup>58</sup> at their farm at Kilduthie, near Banchory. Family lore suggests that she was pregnant. A tragic end for the sister most likely to have it all.

My mother never had any contact with the Strachan family, but in 1990 she responded to a letter in an Aberdeen newspaper from a Strachan relative living in Canada, who was looking for information on the Fyvie Strachans. My mother exchanged some family information with the letter writer and learned the story of Christina’s death. Lizzie Strachan Cardno had written in a letter<sup>59</sup> to a cousin that Christina’s death “was due to an accident and a very simple one at that. She was out milking the cow on that Wed morning, the cow she was milking kicked her pail. She went in the dark, up to the edge of the mill pond, to clean it, stumbled or turned dizzy and fell into the ice-cold water.” She was found barely alive and died later that morning.

A sad note to end on, but I felt a renewed sense of connection to this Strachan family that my granny and my mother talked about. How enterprising and even a little brave these Misses Strachan seemed, leaving home at a young age to pursue further education, moving all over the country for work, participating in intellectual and community events, and rejecting some of the norms of the times. The Strachan lassies have found their place in my family story.

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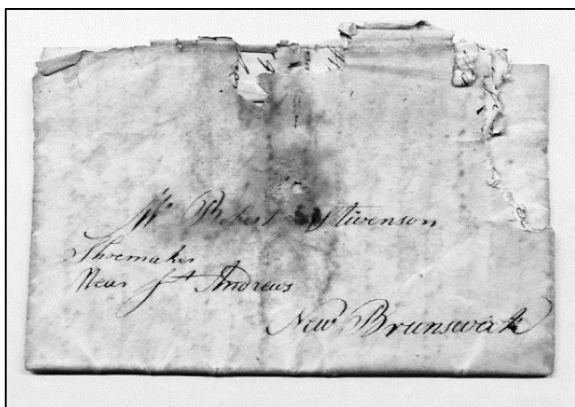
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## Margaret Anderson's 1823 Letter— Revealed!

BY DIANNE BRYDON

In the March 2023 issue of this journal, we published the transcript of a letter written in 1823 in Scotland by my maternal 4x great-grandmother, Margaret Anderson. She had sent it to her son, Robert Stevenson, in New Brunswick, telling him how many in her community had left their ancestral homes and how some of those neighbours had migrated to Prince Edward Island.

The letter had been transcribed and published twice by *The Guardian*



**Figure 1: Margaret Anderson's letter addressed to her son in New Brunswick. Note the damage to the letter.**  
Source: Bill MacKay.

newspaper of Charlotte-town, once in 1934 and again in 1953. We used those transcripts to publish it a third time last year—200 years after it was written. I also prepared an accompanying article to explain the back stories of some of the people on the ship, the *Alexander*, that carried those migrants to Canada—all of whom were my ancestors.

Having shared copies of that article with my relatives,

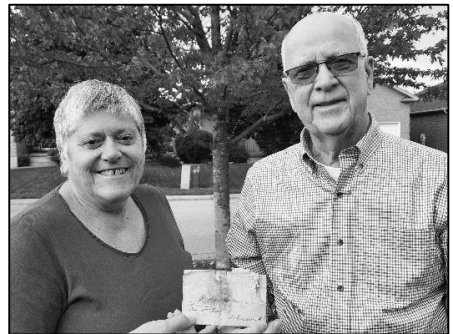
some of whom were newly discovered through *Facebook* or various genealogical websites, lo and behold, another of Margaret's descendants, my fourth cousin Shannon Watts Michael found a photo of the original letter on *Ancestry!*

I subsequently corresponded with the owner of the letter, William (Bill) MacKay, who we worked out is also my fourth cousin, as he is descended from Robert Stevenson, the recipient of the letter in New Brunswick and the brother of my direct ancestor. I also sent Bill the article I had written. He had not known that the letter had been published in *The Guardian* and was happy to have the transcript, as Margaret's handwriting is not always clear.

Bill had always wondered about the route the letter had taken before it came into his possession. We were able to determine that Harry Stevenson, the person identified in *The Guardian* as the owner of the letter in 1934, was actually his grandfather, (Samuel) Harry Stevenson. Harry must have received it from his father, then passed it to his daughter (Bill's mother), from whom Bill had received it.

Bill was interested to know more about the letter writer and the people she mentioned, so he read my article with great interest. I was thrilled to discover that he lived in a small town near Stratford, Ontario, through which I had driven many times on my annual trip to the Stratford Festival. I would be able to stop in and see the letter!

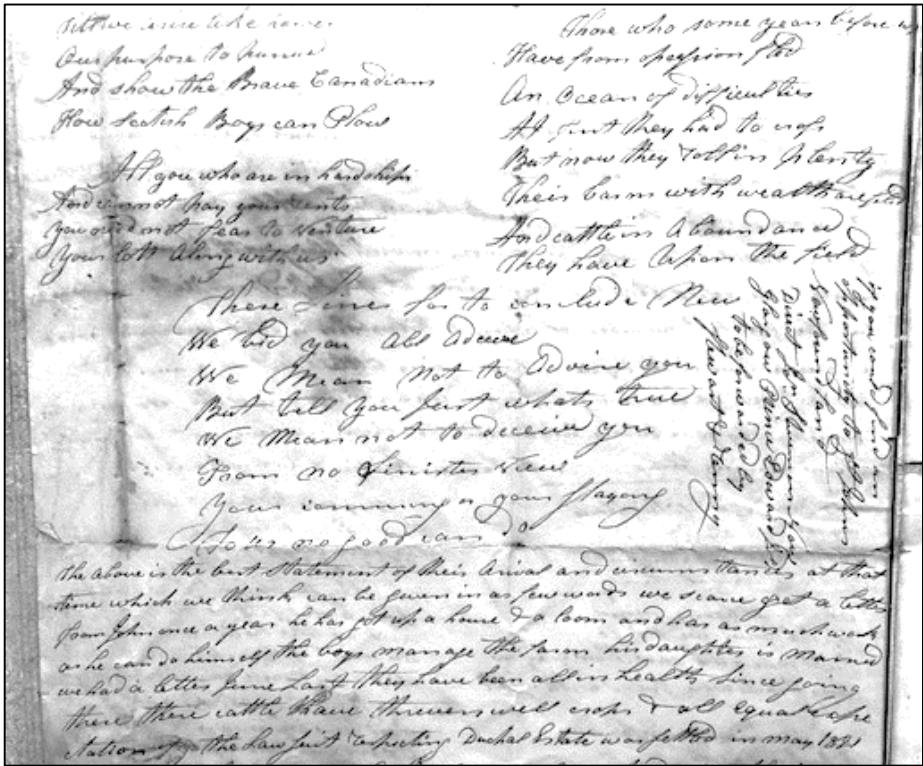
So it was that we met up in the summer of 2023. With great excitement, together we read through the original letter, which he and his forebears have carefully safeguarded all these years.



**Figure 2: The author with her cousin Bill MacKay holding Margaret Anderson's letter.**  
Source: the author.

Seeing the way it was written—the cramped handwriting; a section added in a blank area at 90 degrees, so as to differentiate it from the previously written text; the method of folding and addressing it to her son in New Brunswick—made it more personal to me. It felt different reading the handwritten words than when I had read the typewritten transcript. Her stories of neighbours vacating their farms and leaving her behind seemed more poignant, as well as her description of life back in Scotland. And I am always moved when

discovering a signature—the part of a letter or document that to me is the most individual.

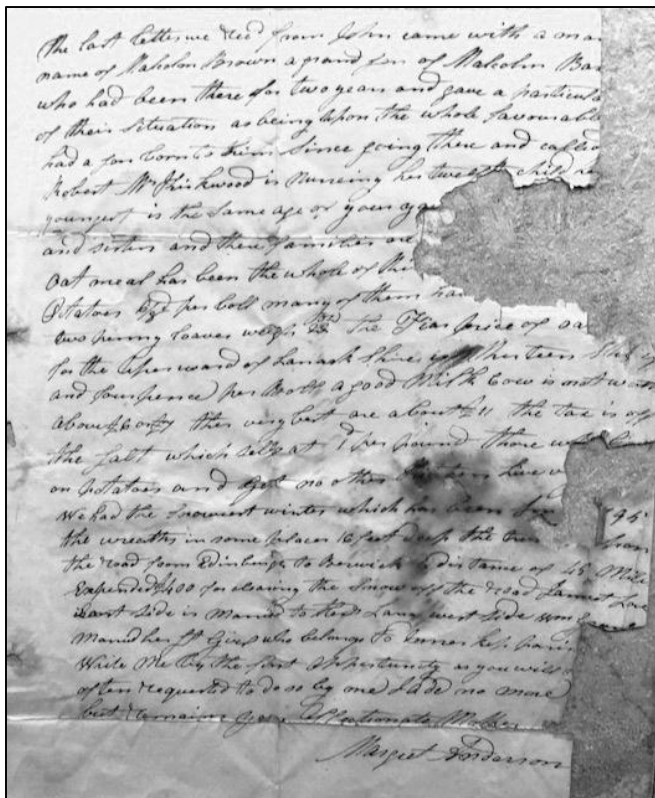


**Figure 3: Writing at 90 degrees to earlier writing. Note darkened damage to paper.**  
Source: Bill MacKay.

All that being said, seeing the letter made me wonder if Margaret had actually written it, or had perhaps dictated it? The formal signature of “Margaret Anderson,” rather than some form of signoff like “Your loving mother,” considering the “Dear son” at the beginning, seems a bit odd to me. But... whether she wrote it herself or had someone record her thoughts does not take away from its valuable content.

When I had read the transcript, I had noticed the blanks where words were missing or illegible. That happened throughout the letter and I was curious to know why. Bill sent me more photos of the various pages, so I could see there were bits of the letter missing—whether from degradation of the paper or from mice nibbling on it. But it was only when I saw in person how the letter was

folded that I could see how the missing parts aligned, creating the same pattern of missing words on each page throughout Margaret’s newsy note.



**Figure 4: The final page with Margaret’s signature and showing damage to the letter.**

Source: Bill MacKay.

in the newspaper. The spelling of specific farm names seems to have been guessed at, while I could make them out clearly from the letter. This might be forgiven, as detailed maps of Scotland from the early 1800s, like the ones that can be found today on the National Library of Scotland website, were not available to the transcriber(s). I had the benefit of poring over those maps, with the transcript at hand, to identify the farm names.

When the letter was folded, one side showed the address, simply “Mr Robert Stevenson, Shoemaker, near St Andrews, New Brunswick.” The reverse of the folded letter was not transcribed by the newspaper so it was new to me. It shows the date stamp when the letter arrived in New Brunswick—14 July

Comparing the letter to the version published in *The Guardian* in 1934 showed that there were more words in the transcript than in the letter. Was this because the letter had further degraded in the more than 100 years since?—and did the transcribers in 1934 take the liberty of “imagining” what Margaret had written to fill in some of the blanks?

Also, the transcriber(s) did not always record place names accurately: Innerkip was easily read in the letter, whereas it was spelled “Inner kes”

1823, almost four months after Margaret wrote it. The scribbled text, in the same hand, is a conundrum. “Charles Stevenson” can be seen at the top. Margaret Anderson was married to Charles Stevenson, but he had died

around 1819, and Robert’s son Charles, in New Brunswick, was 16 years old. The scribbles might have been the attempt of an intermediary to forward the letter on—“Stevenson” can be made out several times, and possibly “St John” and “Shoemaker.”

Or the scribbles might have been added after it arrived, with no bearing on its route.

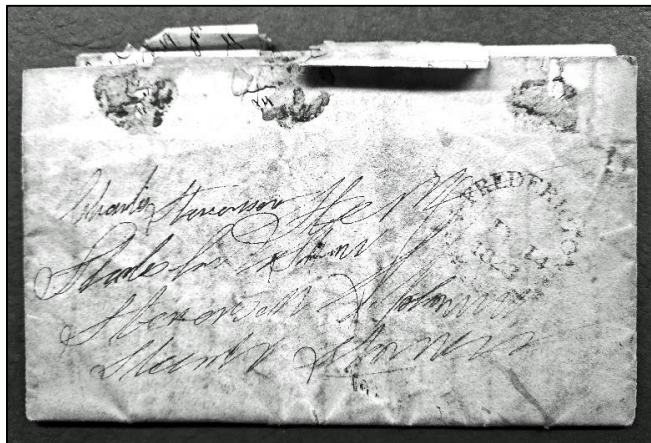


Figure 5: The reverse folded side showing date stamp, scribbled text and losses and damage to the paper.

Source: Bill MacKay.

I learned many lessons from this experience:

- **Joining Facebook** helps you meet distant relatives—without their sleuthing, I would not have found the letter.
- **Post your gems** on the various genealogy platforms—if Bill had not done so, I would not have discovered Margaret’s letter.
- **Answer messages** received through those genealogical websites—if Bill had not responded to my query, I would not be writing this article.
- **Follow up** on discoveries—seeing the original letter was so much better than seeing the photos of it.

And, perhaps the most important lesson of all:

- **Compare transcripts with original documents.** In the case of Margaret’s letter, sometimes the content of the transcript differs from what Margaret actually wrote and farm names are incorrect.

Nevertheless, what a find! Best of all, I have a new-found cousin with a shared legacy and with whom I may now happily compare notes about our common ancestry.

# A Scottish War Bride's Legacy:

## Margaret Deschamps, née Taylor Hannan (1924–2016)

BY ANDY DESJARDINS

*Andy Desjardins is Margaret's son-in-law, married to Jeannette Bonnie Deschamps, her daughter. Andy has been researching their respective family histories since 2008 and has completed a number of family trees. In 2023, Andy and Janet, along with their daughter Marlene and granddaughter Stephanie, spent three weeks in Scotland and Ireland walking the paths of their respective ancestries.*

Margaret Taylor Hannan, affectionately known as *Muggie*, was born at 8:15 a.m. on 10 November 1924 at the Maternity Hospital, Dundee, Scotland. Her father, Alexander Taylor Hannan, was a shipyard worker. Her mother, Catherine Balmain Hannan (née Ritchie), worked as a jute spinner in what was a major industry in Dundee at the time. Margaret was the second of three daughters, her older sister Helen having been born on 4 August 1922 and her younger sibling Elizabeth on 17 July 1927.

### A Difficult Childhood

On 8 July 1922, Catherine and Alexander were married in Dundee. Sadly, it wouldn't be long before tragedy would befall the young family. Only four years after they wed, Alexander died of bronchial pneumonia on 16 September 1928 at the age of 35, leaving behind a young widow of 31 and three young daughters aged 6, 4, and 1. Without any of the safety nets that we enjoy today, Catherine did her best but was hard-pressed to manage a



**Figure 1: Girls' Wing, Aberlour Orphanage, Morayshire, 1936**

Source: © Peter Higginbotham, [www.workhouses.org.uk](http://www.workhouses.org.uk). Used with permission.



home, while toiling long hours in a jute factory and caring for her three daughters.

On order from the Public Assistance Department, Corporation of Dundee on 27 February 1931, the Hannan children were taken into custody and placed in temporary care. On 24 March 1931, the three young girls were admitted to the Aberlour Orphanage in Morayshire, Scotland, where they were to remain until they turned 16 years of age (Figure 1). The Orphanage is located some 200 kilometres north of Dundee and travel was difficult, so the young Hannan girls would not have seen their mother very often, if at all. Rules were strict and discipline was applied as needed. It was a harsh life for the three young Hannan girls but the options were certainly no better.

During her nine years at the Orphanage, Margaret attended school and received about 12 months training in domestic duties to prepare her for adult life. In spring 1940, at the age of 15½, Margaret was sent to work at a home in Aberdeen, but she promptly “decamped” for her mother’s home back in Dundee. It was decided that, rather than return her to Aberlour, she would be sent to Duncarse Children’s Home where she was to remain until she turned 16 on 10 November 1940.

Margaret’s mother, Catherine, married for a second time on 8 April 1939 to a Charles Burnett Lindsay, a coal miner from Dundee, where they lived at 37 Nethergate Road until at least 1948.

## The War Years

World War II broke out in 1939 and, for the next few years, Margaret’s older sister, Helen, worked in the jute mills, as their mother Catherine had done for many years. During that time, Margaret worked in a munitions factory in support of the war effort (Figure 2). Then, in 1942, Margaret met Nelson Deschamps, a young French-Canadian soldier from Thurso, Quebec, who was a private with the 17th Duke of York Royal Canadian Hussars out of Montreal (Figure 3). Nelson had volunteered for service and enlisted on 22 February 1941. He was stationed in the U.K. for training and would later take part in the D-Day landing at Juno Beach in June 1944.



**Figure 2: Margaret Taylor Hannan, circa 1944**  
Source: family collection





**Figure 3: Nelson Deschamps, 1941.**

Source: family collection.

They apparently met at a skating rink and Margaret was swept off her feet by this tall handsome soldier. It didn't take long before they were married—on 31 March 1943 in Dundee. No time was wasted and their first child, Gordon Nelson, was born on 2 March 1944. Even with a husband having shipped out to France, time was found to have a second child, a daughter named Helen Elizabeth Catherine, after Margaret's older sister. The infant Helen, born at 3:25 a.m. on 23 October 1945 in the Maryfield Hospital, Dundee, also bore the names of Margaret's younger sister and mother. By then, Nelson, having been part of the Juno Beach landing in June 1944, had been shipped back to Canada and demobilized on 23 October 1945—the very day his daughter

was born back in Dundee. Talk about coincidence!

Arrangements were made for war brides of Canadian soldiers to be transported to their new home in Canada and this included Margaret and her two children. In May 1946, Margaret and her children—Gordon, aged 2 years and 2 months and Helen, a mere 7 months old—boarded the RMS *Queen Mary* in Southampton for the transatlantic voyage to Canada. Upon arriving at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the family was processed before boarding a train for Montreal, where they were met by Margaret's husband, Nelson. They then made their way to Thurso, Quebec, 160 kilometres west of Montreal, and there they settled into their new life together.

Margaret's older sister, Helen, also met a young Canadian soldier by the name of James (Jimmy) Herbert Craig. He was a private with the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa. After a brief courtship, they were married on 20 May 1942 in Dundee. Helen was aged 19 and James was 22. Two months before Margaret sailed for Canada to be reunited with her husband, Helen left on the RMS *Mauretania* from Liverpool to meet up with her husband James, arriving at Pier 21 on 1 March 1946. She was also travelling with her two children born in Dundee—Sandra (born 17 May 1943) and James (23 June 1945). Interestingly, the sisters had married Canadian soldiers who lived within 50 kilometres of each other in Canada, although they were from different regiments. It must have been heartwarming for both young

women. Helen and Jimmy eventually retired to New South Wales, Australia, where their daughter and her husband had emigrated. Both have since passed away.

On 25 September 1948, at the age of 21, Margaret's younger sister, Elizabeth, married William Kettles at St. Peter's Church, Dundee. Both worked in a jute factory where they probably met. Elizabeth never left Scotland and passed away on 26 November 2003. Margaret did manage to go back to Dundee in 1964 and spend a month with Elizabeth and her family. They kept in touch by mail but never saw each other again.

### **WW II War Brides—Government Assistance**

After August 1944, the Department of National Defence went about organizing the movement of war brides with the precision of a D-Day assault. The Army was put in charge of moving brides and their children for all three services—the Army, Navy and Air Force.<sup>1</sup>

Over the next two and a half years, representatives of the Department of National Defence, stationed in the Canadian Wives Bureau, the Immigration Branch and the Canadian Red Cross, worked closely together to ensure the safe and efficient transportation of thousands of servicemen's dependants to Canada. One of the first things that the Army did when it took over this responsibility was to set up the Canadian Wives Bureau on the third floor of a fashionable and expensive store called *Galleries Lafayette* on Regent Street in central London, U.K.

Established as a directorate of the Adjutant-General's Branch at Canadian military headquarters, the Bureau was responsible for arranging dependants' passage to Canada, collecting and caring for them en route to their ships, and providing information and welfare services. The Bureau also encouraged the formation of war brides' clubs in the United Kingdom, where brides could hold social gatherings and hear talks on life in Canada. As a sign of their success, by November 1945, 32 brides' clubs were functioning in England and Scotland.

Between 1942 and 1948, some 48,000 women accompanied by 22,000 children mostly from Great Britain, landed at Pier 21 in Halifax as wives of Canadian servicemen stationed abroad during the Second World War.

### **Margaret's Life in Canada**

Thurso is a small town about 50 kilometres east of Ottawa. In the 1940s, its main industry was farming and a pulp mill was the area's major employer. Just a few months after arriving, a tragedy took the life of Margaret and

Nelson's daughter Helen, who died on 26 August 1946 as a result of a domestic accident at the age of 10 months. Helen was buried on 27 August 1946 in the Saint-Jean-l'Évangéliste Cemetery in Thurso, Quebec. On 9 April 1947, Jeannette Bonnie was born and the family was once again growing.

The first few years were spent in Thurso, Quebec, where Nelson's Deschamps family had settled back in the mid-1800s. In the early 1950s they moved from there to Hull, Quebec, just across the river from Ottawa. Nelson worked as a carpenter in the construction business. Another daughter, Marlene Azilda, was born on 25 November 1952; Azilda was the name of Nelson's mother, Marlene's paternal grandmother. Then, on 13 December 1955, their second son Richard was born.

By 1962, the family was living at 27, rue Lambert, Hull (now Gatineau), in a small apartment. While working at his day job, Nelson started his own contracting business, working nights and weekends and was quite successful. In the fall of 1963, they moved to 151 Hinton Avenue in Ottawa's near west end. Nelson's business venture was very successful under the name of *Modern Carpentry* and the move was, according to Nelson, a sound business move. While on Hinton Avenue, another daughter was born on 26 January 1965—Kimberly Jane, who would be their last child.

The following year, the family moved to 2547 Hanlon Avenue, situated in a new area of Ottawa's west end. It backed onto green space and Margaret



**Figure 4: Perley Hospital workers, 1957. Catherine is second from the left, front row.**

Source: family collection.

loved her backyard. In summer, she would sit and read for hours enjoying her "cuppa" (tea). The family had grown, married and provided her with grandchildren, and this home was often the meeting place for family barbecues and holiday dinners. This was Margaret's "happy place." It was here that her husband Nelson passed away on 27 September 1975 at the age of 57.

Margaret's war bride sister Helen and her husband, James Herbert Craig, also settled in Ottawa. Jimmy had a long career serving until retirement as a firefighter with the Ottawa Fire Department. Margaret and Helen continued a close relationship and the families enjoyed great times together. The Craigs had two children, Sandra and James, who were close in age with Gordon and Jeannette (Janet). After their retirement, Helen and Jimmy moved to Australia following their married daughter and her husband who by then had children. Both Helen and Jimmy passed away in Australia.

Catherine Hannan, the sisters' mother, was widowed again, having lost her second husband, Charles Lindsay, on 30 November 1950. She followed Margaret and Helen to Canada, immigrating in May 1955 and arriving at the Port of Montreal on the TSS *Captain Cook*. Catherine lived in Ottawa, where she worked at the Perley Hospital (Figure 4) for many years. She (Figure 5) passed away in February 1981 at the age of 84.

Margaret passed away on 10 February 2016 at the age of 91, after suffering from Alzheimer's during the last years of her life. She is buried with her husband Nelson and her mother Catherine at the Pinecrest Cemetery in Ottawa.

### **Margaret's Legacy**

One can only wonder at Margaret's life: the hardships suffered at such an early age at the Aberlour Orphanage; growing up without her father; the struggles through the Second World War; settling into a new country in a town where French was the primary language; raising a family mostly by herself while Nelson worked long hours to provide a good standard of living; and finally, being widowed at the young age of 50. One marvels at her strength and courage, her commitment to her family, and to her hard life, to say the least.

At the time of her death in 2016, Margaret left behind five children, nine grandchildren, twelve great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. Today the number of descendants has grown considerably; her DNA lives on in her family (Figure 6).

Margaret had a great Scottish sense of humour and loved to laugh, sing and dance. Her Highland fling usually appeared at Christmas. She had a special name for me, which I will not mention here, but which I treasure. She never



**Figure 5: Catherine Hannan Lindsay (née Ritchie), Margaret's mother, circa 1975.**

Source: family collection.



**Figure 6: Margaret and some of her family members, 5 April 2009. (L-R) Front row: daughters Kimberly and Marlene, Margaret, daughter Janet (Jeannette), daughter-in-law Susan. Back row: granddaughters Stephanie and Marlene. Source: family collection.**

lost her Scottish accent but would argue she had none! She left rich memories to last us a lifetime. The more I get to know her through my genealogical research, the more I admire and love her. Muggie was a true survivor!

## Reference Note

<sup>1</sup> This section has been extracted from the website *Canadian War Brides* ([www.canadianwarbrides.com/](http://www.canadianwarbrides.com/)) created by war brides historian Melynda Jarratt, which in turn has been extracted from *The War Brides of New Brunswick*, Chapter One, thesis by Ms. Jarratt. It is used with her permission.

### 30th Anniversary Writing Competition Results

Our competition had 12 entries. Six judges made tough decisions.  
Here are the results.

1st	<b>Claire Callender</b>	<i>The Misses Strachan from Fyvie</i> (published in this edition of ACR)	\$300
2nd	<b>Carol Annett</b>	<i>Who was Annabella Chatterton?</i>	\$200
3rd	<b>Veronica Scrimger</b>	<i>Hannah Scrimger, 1840–1876: The Untold Story of a Mariner’s Hardworking Wife</i>	\$100

### Honourable Mentions

**Linda Reid** *DNA Confirms a Lloyd family in Ireland for Two and a Half Centuries*

**Ann Burns** *Frances Core 1860–1930*

**Adrienne Stevenson** *Robert Malcolm: Saddler, Soldier, Sportsman*

These and other stories submitted to the competition will be shared in upcoming editions of ACR. Congratulations to the winners. Thank you to all the entrants and our judges.

# We Shall Remember Them

BY MARCIA CLEMENT

*Marcia is a retired federal public servant whose interest in genealogy began over 25 years ago, researching her own family roots. In 2018 she volunteered to work on the project documenting the lives of the soldiers who died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station in World War I. This biography recounts the story of a soldier who, in spite of being recorded in the chaplains' journal of deaths, did not die in the war. The research on his life after the war presents many twists and turns.*

## **Private John McAuley<sup>©</sup>**

**Regimental number: 808528**

**50th Battalion (Calgary), Canadian Infantry**

**born: 15 March 1879 or 15 March 1882–died: 1958**

Although another source suggests he was born in 1879, according to the attestation papers that John McAuley signed when he joined the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force (CEF), he was born on 15 March 1882 in Birmingham, West Midlands, England, was unmarried and worked as a labourer.<sup>1</sup> He noted that he had experience serving with the 103rd Regiment (Calgary Rifles), a militia unit established on 1 April 1910.<sup>2</sup> He was described as 5' 4" tall, with dark hair and hazel eyes. When John joined the CEF in Banff, Alberta, Canada, on 1 April 1916, he listed his nephew, Edward Walter McAuley, as his next of kin.

John McAuley was initially assigned to the 137th (Calgary) Battalion. He sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to England on the SS *Olympic* on 22 August 1916, arriving in Liverpool on 30 August 1916.

On 1 January 1917 John was assigned to the 21st Reserve Battalion (Alberta) at Seaford in East Sussex for training<sup>3</sup> before being sent to France on 20 January 1917 to join the 50th Battalion (Calgary) preparing to attack Vimy Ridge.<sup>4</sup> The Battle of Vimy Ridge began on 9 April 1917 and continued for three days.<sup>5</sup> As part of the 4th Canadian Division, the 50th Battalion was positioned to assault the heavily defended north end of the ridge, specifically Hill 145, the highest point of the ridge (where the Vimy Memorial now stands).<sup>6</sup>

The battalion took heavy casualties before being relieved on April 10 for reorganization; they were moved forward again on April 12 and remained on the front line until the evening of April 13.<sup>7</sup>

On 18 April 1917, John reported feeling ill and was invalidated to

England; he was sent to the Bethnal Green Military Hospital, London, where he was diagnosed with trench fever. He was transferred to the Canadian Military Hospital at Bramshott the same day. In May 1917 he was sent to the 2nd Canadian Convalescent Depot at Hastings, East Sussex, but was readmitted to the Bramshott military hospital on 5 September 1917, this time for gonorrhoea. From there John was sent to the Canadian Specialty Hospital for Venereal Disease at Witley Camp, Surrey, in October, returning to Bramshott on 5 December 1917.

It wasn't until September 1918 that he returned to France, where, after a few days in a reinforcement camp, he rejoined the 50th Battalion in the field on 30 September 1918 in the midst of the Hundred Days Offensive (2 August–11 November 1918)<sup>8</sup> that ended World War I.

An entry in the chaplains' records for No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (CCCS) indicates that the body of Private John McAuley, service number 808528, was recovered from the field but that the actual date of his death was unknown. It states that he was buried in Grave 13, Plot 1, Row A of the Emerchicourt Communal Cemetery on 31 October 1918.<sup>9</sup>

However, according to his personnel file, after influenza once again resulted in his being admitted

to Canadian convalescent depots at Étapes and Cayeux from 12 November 1918 to 21 January 1919, John McAuley, service number 808528, was transferred to England on 26 January 1919 for demobilization. He was discharged on 16 April 1919. His proposed residence after discharge was 5 Rosefield Terrace, Upper Sutton Street, Birmingham, the city where he had been born.

Who was buried in the grave that was supposedly that of John McAuley? We may never know for certain.

When the bodies of soldiers from Emerchicourt were transferred to their final resting places in the Douai British Cemetery, Cuincy, France, in 1950, the remains of Private Joseph Pelletier (service number 3320908) of the 38th Canadian Battalion and an unknown soldier were exhumed. Although Private Pelletier is not mentioned in the chaplains' journal, both bodies were alongside other soldiers from No. 1 CCCS buried the same day in the Emerchicourt Communal Cemetery.<sup>10</sup> Either body may have been recovered from the grave previously identified as that of John McAuley.

Researching John McAuley was intriguing, not only for the fact that he didn't die, but also because it required following up on many clues that didn't seem immediately related to him and revealed a couple

of interesting coincidences. To begin with, there was no information about his parents or any siblings, though John's attestation papers provided a date and place of birth.

That he identified as his next of kin his nephew, Edward Walter McAuley, meant that John had at least one brother. According to the 1921 Census of Canada, Edward, aged 13, lived with his mother, Ada, and his stepfather, J. B. Rushton, in Lower Londonderry, Colchester County, Nova Scotia.<sup>11</sup> With this information it was possible to identify that Edward's father was Walter McAuley, who had married Ada Marr in 1906, listing his parents as John and Mary McAuley.<sup>12</sup> Walter died in 1909, aged about 30,<sup>13</sup> when his son was just over a year old. Unfortunately, even with having the names of John's parents and his brother, no birth records for him were discovered.

Another clue to John's identity was found in his military pay records: for some unspecified reason, John assigned \$15 a month to one Clarence Lindsay of Londonderry, Nova Scotia. Researching this person, it was found that in 1891 Walter McAuley, aged 14, was living in the household of Samuel Lindsay<sup>14</sup> along with Clarence, the family's 24-year-old son. According to this census record, Walter

arrived in Canada in 1886. This led the researcher to question how Walter and possibly his younger brother, John, came to be living in Canada as children: did they come with or without their parents? Separately or together?

The answer was found in the Middlemore Index of Home Children on the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa website. (The first coincidence.) John Throgmorton Middlemore opened a Children's Emigration Home in Birmingham, England, in 1872 in the belief that poor children could be rescued from a life of poverty and provided with a healthier environment and greater opportunity in Canada. Approximately 5,200<sup>15</sup> of an estimated 100,000 home children sent to Canada<sup>16</sup> came through Middlemore Homes, the last Middlemore children arriving in 1932.<sup>17</sup>

Library and Archives Canada records indicate that the Macaulay [*sic*] family had fallen on hard times, the parents had separated, and the children were not being well cared for. On 6 February 1886 their father effectively surrendered Walter (10), John (7), Rose (5) and Louisa (3) to the Middlemore Emigration Home on St. Luke's Road, Birmingham.<sup>18</sup> In these records, John's birthdate is shown as 15 March 1879.<sup>19</sup> What happened to the girls is not clear but Walter and John arrived in



Quebec City, Canada, on the SS *Lake Superior* on 15 June 1886 to be settled with Joseph Spencer of Londonderry, Nova Scotia.<sup>20</sup> John was still residing with the Spencer family in 1891.<sup>21</sup> It is probable that Walter was moved from this first settlement family when he left school and had to receive wages; Samuel Lindsay was a carriage builder.<sup>22</sup> In 1901, John McAuley was living on his own, working as an agricultural labourer in Londonderry.<sup>23</sup>

Another notation in John's military file stated that after demobilization he could be reached care of Mrs. William Savage at the Rosefield, Birmingham, address. The Midlands Electoral Register for 1920 listed William Savage [the younger], Louisa Savage and William Savage [the elder] as residents at 5 Rosefield Place, Birmingham, England.<sup>24</sup> With the information that John had a sister named Louisa, it could be confirmed that Louisa McAuley married William Savage on 18 May 1907.<sup>25</sup> John had found his little sister!

In 1930 a family that included a John McAuley, his wife Jane, daughter Irene and an adolescent passenger named Lily Pritchett (all on the same ticket), left England to settle in Canada.<sup>26</sup> The clue confirming that this was Private John McAuley was the 1939 England and Wales Register; it listed John,

Jane and Irene with John's birthdate the same as his attestation papers, albeit three years earlier, consistent with the Middlemore Home records in Library and Archives Canada.

Further confirmation was found in the marriage of John McAuley and Jane Pritchett in the spring of 1920 in Kings Norton, an area of Birmingham.<sup>27, 28</sup> Jane Pritchett (nee Brookes) had borne a daughter, Lily, in Birmingham in 1917.<sup>29</sup> In January 1922 John and Jane's daughter Irene was born in Kings Norton.<sup>30</sup>

Life in Canada obviously didn't work out, because the family that had left in 1930 returned to Birmingham just two years later.<sup>31</sup> On the eve of World War II, John, Jane and Irene were living in the village of Meriden, between Birmingham and Coventry, West Midlands.<sup>32</sup> John McAuley died in Meriden in 1958.<sup>33</sup> Irene McAuley married John Halliday in Coventry in April 1942;<sup>34</sup> she passed away in February 2005 in Dacorum, Hertfordshire, England.<sup>35</sup>

And what became of the child, Edward Walter McAuley (known as Ted), that John named as his next of kin? He emigrated to the United States on 11 June 1929.<sup>36</sup> He married Ella Elizabeth Rogerson, from Tryon, Prince Edward Island, Canada, in Waltham, Massachusetts, on 25 June 1932.<sup>37</sup> (Second coincidence: Ella Rogerson's sister, Margaret, was the mother of the

researcher's sister-in-law, who lives in Tryon). Ted and Ella had been married for 68 years when Ted died in Meriden (third coincidence), New Haven County, Connecticut, on 5 December 2000. Ella (later known as Ellen) died in Natick, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, on 27 November 2009.<sup>38</sup> They had four children.<sup>39</sup>

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### Don't miss these Talks from the BIFHSGO Vaults!

12 October 2024	Barbara Tose	<i>Travels with My Aunt: Adventures in Europe 1914</i> (February 2014)
14 December 2024	Ann Burns	<i>From Coolross to Canada and Back</i> Great Moment (June 2011)
11 January 2025	Alison Hare	<i>The Time of Cholera</i> (February 2009)
10 May 2025	Marnie McColl	<i>Copyright for the Family Historian</i> (December 2016)

## Techniques and Resources

# The Cream of the Crop

Top items from recent posts on Canada's Anglo-Celtic-Connections blog at [www.anglocelticconnections.ca](http://www.anglocelticconnections.ca)



BY JOHN D. REID

### Canadian Pacific Steamship Company Records, 1897–1981

A collection of 289,555 of these records is now on *Ancestry*. The bulk and most detailed of them are westbound passenger lists—213,190 records from 1955 to 1960. For ships leaving from the U.K., they should duplicate the outgoing passenger lists, also ending in 1960, that are available at various sites. The source is holdings at the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology and the Gjenvick-Gjønvik's GG Archives. Coverage of later years is hit and miss.

### England and Wales

The U.K.'s National Archives (TNA) has new guides that can help trace family history from the U.K. back to its former colonies. They are introductions to the sorts of records held, with links to guides providing more detailed advice on how to find the records in TNA's collection.

The London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) has been renamed "The London Archives" (TLA?). It has a new, cleaner-looking website.

Still in London, *Ancestry* has updated its collection **London, England, Freedom of the City Admission Papers, 1681–1930**, now with 710,889 entries. The basic information included is name, date of indenture, parent or guardian's name, county of residence and master's name.

All the following are also from *Ancestry*:

In collaboration with Barnsley Archives and Local Studies, 112,414 records have been added to **Non-Conformist Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials** in the area from 1788 to 1999. The collection includes member lists and records from 23 Barnsley Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist chapels, and outlying communities such as Ardsley, Cudworth, Darfield, Hoyland, Staincross, and Wombwell. Indexes link to the original record images.

Some 2,993,285 entries have been added from the Lancashire Archives

at Preston to the collection **Lancashire, England, Catholic Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1762–1913**. For privacy reasons no records are less than 110 years old. The collection will be updated annually.

**Lancashire, England, Non-Conformist Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1762–2005** contains 447,396 records. It includes images of the originals and has a browse capability, with the details for some Lancashire adherents to Protestant churches who didn't follow the practices of the Church of England. Sourced from the Lancashire Archives, the collection has records from over 300 churches and chapels. Curiously, none are from Liverpool or Manchester.

Over one million records are in the **Gwent, Wales, Workhouse Registers, 1833–1957** collection. They are mostly registers of workhouse admissions but also include registers of births, marriages and deaths compiled by the workhouses. Most records are for Abergavenny, Bedwellty, Chepstow, Monmouth, Newport and Pontypool.

## Scotland

*ScotlandsPeople* has significantly expanded its online archive by adding nearly 4,000 new volumes of Church of Scotland records—over 3,000 kirk session records and

documents from presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. They're free. Covering the period from the 1560s to 1900, these are minute books, accounts and cash books, communion rolls, seat rents, and poor relief and education records. Browse by reference numbers, court names and place names.

The collection **Aberdeenshire, Scotland, Burial Registers, 1769–1983** contains 370,539 records from *Ancestry*. Information may include name, age, death date, spouse, parents, occupation and address. Find burial registers and lair (burial plot) sales papers. Cemeteries and churchyards are included from the following places across Aberdeenshire: Allenvale, Cairnie, Drumblade, Essie, Fettercairn, Fordoun, Fogue, Gartly, Glass, Grove, John Knox, Marykirk, Nellfield, Nigg, Old Machar, Rhynie, Ruthven, St. Clement's, St. Nicholas, St. Peter's, Trinity and Ythanwells.

## Ireland

*The Military Archives*, which collects material from the date of the foundation of the Irish State up to the present day, has a new website at <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/>.

Have you explored the *Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland*? Using digital technologies, it reimagines and reconstructs, for all-island, the Public Record Office of Ireland that

was destroyed on 30 June 1922 in the opening engagement of the Civil War. Gleanings from the censuses of Ireland, 1813–1851 include a recent addition of 4,000 names from the 1821 Census. Much more is promised in 2025.

*Ancestry* now has the collection **Ireland, Railway Employment Records, 1870–1940**, providing details of workers on Ireland’s railways, bus lines and tramways before and after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. Over 300,000 records contain essential details including birth and death dates, occupations, salaries and employment locations of railway workers. Find personal details such as pay adjustments, sick leave and union affiliations.

Sadly, Claire Santry is no longer updating her *Irish Genealogy News* blog. John Grenham’s *Irish Roots* blog is still going strong but with a more personal approach. This year’s BIFHSGO conference, focussing on Ireland, will fill the gap for a while.

### **Coastguard and Marine**

Published in association with The National Archives (TNA), the **Coastguards 1801–1952** collection from *Findmypast* (FMP) includes 212,426 images and transcripts from establishment books, service records and more. The majority of records are for service pre-dating the drastic reduction in personnel when HM Coastguard was

transferred from the Admiralty to the Board of Trade on 31 March 1923.

FMP have added 101,555 transcriptions to the existing collection **British Royal Navy and Royal Marines Service and Pension Records 1704–1939** from series ADM 139. TNA describes the series as “Admiralty: Royal Navy Continuous Service Engagement Books” which “give the date and place of birth, physical characteristics on entry, and a summary of the service of each rating.” If you don’t have the convenience of a FMP subscription, digital copies of Royal Navy ratings’ service records 1853–1928 can be searched and downloaded for free from TNA with registration. The indexes to ADM 139 are also available to download as digital microfilm.

Also from FMP, **Women’s Royal Naval Service Officer Records** comprise 59,448 images and transcripts. These are digitised images of the original National Archives records in series ADM 318 (officer files) and ADM 321 (appointments, promotions and resignations). The two collections cover the period between 1917 and 1919. Digital copies of both series of Women’s Royal Naval Service records can be searched and downloaded from TNA free with registration.

## Maps

The National Library of Scotland (NLS) now provides free online the most detailed Ordnance Survey maps for post-Second World War England, Scotland and Wales. Houses are shown individually often with the house number; significant buildings like churches, libraries and cinemas are labelled. Bomb sites are identified as “Ruin(s).” Full details and access instructions are at <https://maps.nls.uk/os/national-grid/>.

Explore the evolving boundaries of England’s ancient parks and designed landscapes with the NLS “Historic parks in England, 1890s–1900s” map viewer, at <https://map.s.nls.uk/projects/historic-parks/>.

## UK, Electoral Registers, 2011–2018

*Ancestry* updated this database which now contains 45,527,687 entries. Records include the name, birth date (range), residence date (range), address and residence place. It is based on the open version of the electoral register, which does not include all the information collected. Individuals

can opt out of inclusion; in 2018, about 25 million did.

## New *Legacy Family Tree 10*

This is one of the leading pieces of genealogical software in North America, along with those by *Family Tree Maker* and *RootsMagic*. The learning curve with any of these is sufficiently steep that changing software is not to be done lightly. With the new *Legacy Family Tree 10 for Windows*, would FREE be enough to get you to at least download it and try it? Be your own judge. Start at <https://legacyfamilytree.com/> with an introduction to the new version, accompanied by links to download it and helpful videos.

## Cite-Builder

If you struggle with formatting citations properly, try this website specifically designed for genealogists. It offers free access to a basic software version with a limited selection of common citation sources in multiple styles, including *Evidence Explained*, *Chicago*, *Harvard*, *WikiTree*, *Strathclyde* and more. See <https://cite-builder.com>.

## REMINDER

**Video recordings of BIFHSGO presentations are a membership benefit. Login to the website and search a list of titles and speakers for past presentations (2011-2024).**

**Go to: <https://www.bifhsgo.ca/meeting-videos-and-handouts>.**





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## Annual General Meeting Festivities—8 June 2024



Year One members Patricia Roberts-Pichette, Bob Lamoureux, Doug Hoddinott and Kathleen Mitchell help President Dianne Brydon cut the 30th Anniversary cake.



Upper left: Ken McKinlay, Certificate of Recognition for his Back to Basics talks. Upper right: Maureen Amey, Certificate of Recognition for her leadership of the London SIG. Lower left: Carol Annett, Best ACR Article for 2023. Lower right: Ken McKinlay is inducted into BIFHSGO's Hall of Fame. Absent: Nancy Dale Conroy for Best Feature Talk by a member.

## **BIFHSGO Board of Directors 2024–2025**

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## **The Society**

The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa (BIFHSGO) is an independent, federally incorporated society and a registered charity (Reg. No. 89227 4044 RR0001). Our purpose is to encourage, carry on and facilitate research into, and publication of, family histories by people who have ancestors in the British Isles.

We have two objectives: to research, preserve, and disseminate Canadian and British Isles family and social history, and to promote genealogical research through a program of public education, showing how to conduct this research and preserve the findings in a readily accessible form.

We publish genealogical research findings and information on research resources and techniques, hold public meetings on family history, and participate in the activities of related organizations.

Each year members enjoy four issues of *Anglo-Celtic Roots (ACR)* and ten family history meetings, plus members-only information on bifhsgo.ca, friendly advice from other members, and participation in special interest groups. Membership dues for 2024 (individuals or institutions) are \$50 (with electronic ACR) or \$60 (with printed ACR).

# BIFHSGO Calendar of Events

## Saturday Morning Meetings

**In-person**—Geneva Hall, Knox Presbyterian Church, 120 Lisgar St., Ottawa

**Online**—on Zoom, registration required

†14 September 2024 **Middlemore Children: In Their Own Words**

9:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m. Patricia Roberts-Pichette and Glenn Wright reprise an award-winning talk from 2006, bringing us Middlemore Children’s stories in their own words.

10:15 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **Exciting Cause: an investigation into women confined in the 1890s to the Kingston Asylum for the Insane (Rockwood)**

Laurie Fyffe’s discovery that her great-great-grand-mother spent time in Rockwood Asylum led her to the medical case history files for patients. There she discovered the stories and tragedies of women who fell short of expected behaviour in late 19th century Canada.

†12 October 2024 **Travels With My Aunt: Adventures in Europe, 1914**

10:00 a.m.–11:45 a.m. Barbara Tose reprises her 2014 presentation of her great-grand-aunt’s travels through Europe in the summer of 1914. Barbara weaves the story of Nellie’s adventures, as told in a 30-page letter to her brother, with the events leading to the start of WW I.

†9 November 2024 **Rebuilding A Life After Service in the Canadian**

10:00 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **Forestry Corps, With Help from the Soldier Settlement Board**

Frank Brydon served in the Canadian Forestry Corps during World War One. His granddaughter, Dianne Brydon tells of his experiences, his injury and his dealings with the Soldier Settlement Board in rebuilding his life upon his return.

**\*Zoom only meeting †Hybrid meeting**

**Check our website at [www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca)** for up-to-date information on our monthly meetings, education talks, and details of special interest group meetings.

## Articles for *Anglo-Celtic Roots*

Articles and illustrations for publication are welcome. For advice on preparing manuscripts, please email the Editor, at [acreditor@bifhsgo.ca](mailto:acreditor@bifhsgo.ca). The deadline for submissions to the Winter issue is 15 October 2024.