



British Home Children Advocacy & Research Association

Spring 2018 Newsletter

Written by Lori Oschefski and Andrew Simpson

Special guest author: Alan Bridle & Ann Griffin



130 years later, a family reunited!

The search for the missing Delaney children from Scotland has come to an end! 130 years ago, Emma Stirling changed their names and smuggled them out of Scotland. International team work has now reunited this family.

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Spring's featured BHC: Augustus Bridle

Adapted from the family story written by Alan Bridle with special permission of Augustus's Grandson George Augustus Bridle

On 4 March 1868 in the village of Cann near Shaftesbury in the Blackmore Vale of North Dorset, Sarah Ann Bridle, unmarried, living on her own and a month shy of her twentieth birthday, gave birth to a boy, registered as Augustus John Bridewell. It is unclear why Augustus' birth record lists his surname as "Bridewell" – was this Sarah Ann's attempt to conceal her family name from the registrar, or just a loose use of phonetic spelling by the registrar? Other bearers of the Bridle surname were occasionally recorded as "Brydle", "Bridell" or "Bridewell" in less official documents, so correct spelling of surnames may not have been a priority for everyone who was involved in record keeping at the time.

We do not know who else was present at Augustus Bridle's birth but there is much documentation of who was at his funeral service at 3 pm in Toronto on 23 December 1952. The honorary pallbearers included the renowned composer, conductor and educator [Sir Ernest MacMillan](#); the painter, sculptor and businessman [Ivor Rhys Lewis](#); the painters [Fred H. Brigden](#) and [Fred S. Haines](#); [G. D. Atkinson](#), music director and piano and organ teacher at the Ontario Ladies' College in Whitby, Ontario; the cellist [Boris Hambourg](#); the muralist [Fred S. Challenger](#); and the journalist/author [William R. Plewman](#). The brief, simple service featured the playing of the slow movement of a violin sonata composed by [Dr Healey Willan](#), performed by [Elie Spivak](#), a former concert master of the Toronto Symphony, with Willan at the piano. The attendance was emblematic of the broad reach of "Gus" Bridle's life in Canada, as was the place where the service was held: the Great Hall of the [Arts and Letters Club of Toronto](#), which he had helped to found and to energize.

It was a long and improbable path from Cann to Toronto, from the infant "Augustus Bridewell" to Augustus Bridle, arts and drama critic for the Toronto Daily Star, organizer of choirs and concerts, "Fellow Member Number One" and the "Father of the Arts and Letters Club". The identity of Augustus's father remains a mystery, but we know a little about his mother. Sarah Ann Bridle was born on 4 April 1848 in East Orchard, Dorset. Her father Charles was a blacksmith, one of thirteen children of another blacksmith, George, who raised his large family in nearby East Stour. The "Bridle" name, unusual outside the western counties of England, is not unusual at all in Dorset (and George Bridle the blacksmith clearly did his part to make it even less unusual within the Blackmore Vale). Like many English surnames, it derives from a trade: "bridelsmyths" were workers in leather and metal who made bridles for horses.

Augustus's name was spelt correctly on the record of his baptism on 26 April 1868. This second record of Augustus' presence on Earth lists Sarah Ann as a "single woman" and shows that he was baptized in Compton Abbas, a village about 3 miles south of Cann.

Augustus would soon be an orphan. His grandfather Charles Bridle died in December 1869 at age 46. On 6 October 1870 his mother Sarah Ann died of consumption at age 22. Just two and a half years into his life Augustus' closest Bridle ancestor was his then-78-year-old great grandfather George Bridle.

Letters written to Augustus in Canada, later in his life, offer glimpses of his plight on his mother's death in 1870. In a letter dated 22 July 1890, Henry Beeson, a Methodist minister in Allendale, Northumberland told him:



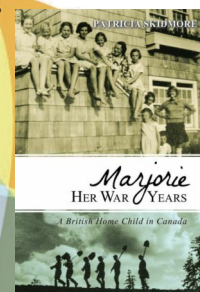
Canada now has a National British Home Child Day!

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Portrait of Augustus Bridle at the Wellington, Ontario home of his daughter-in-law Constance Delaplante Bridle

Patricia Skidmore's new book "Marjorie: Her War Years" to be launched at BHCARA's summer BHCD Family Reunion! See page 7 for details!



Andrew Simpson "Finding my voice....telling my story" Page 9

Ann Griffin "The Visitor" Page 12

Lori Oschefski "Home Children in Music" Page 11

"Mr John Coombs of East Stower (now of Newbury House, Gillingham, Dorset) told me in 1870 of a young person being in consumption who was the grandchild of two aged members of his class. I went and found a tall nice looking young person in concern about her soul. Mr C, and I visited her regularly and had the satisfaction of knowing that she found salvation and died in peace. She was very anxious about her little boy and so were her grandparents. The winter being severe they feared they would not survive it."

In another letter to Augustus dated 22 October 1890 Henry Beeson added:

"I remember your dear mother very distinctly because I visited her for a good many months. She was tall and very nice looking so that no wonder being an orphan and so young she was led astray. She lingered a long time in a very retired cottage and I question if any one ever visited her save Mr Coombs and myself."

At the 1871 UK census, three-year-old Augustus was living with 79-year-old George Bridle in East Stour Common, along with George's second wife Eliza, then 56, and their 14-year-old son Joseph. I presume the venerable blacksmith and his second wife took Augustus temporarily into their care after Sarah Ann's death but they evidently sought to place him in an orphanage. That was not easy to arrange, according to Mr Beeson's July 1890 letter:

"I first tried Mr Muller's orphanage at Bristol, then Mr Spurgeon's in London but both in vain. The House for Little Boys in Kent would have taken you for 6 shillings per week but I could not pay that. Dr. S.'s House was new and small but I tried it and was encouraged. Then I asked the Guardians of the Poor to grant the cost of an outfit and to take you to London and they agreed. I went across the country invalided and knew no more of you save that one of our richest Methodists, Mr Mewburn, paid for your support."

The "Dr S.'s House" who accepted Augustus, was the London orphanage founded by Methodist minister Thomas Bowman Stephenson in 1869. Originally known as "The Children's Home", it later became the "[National Children's Home](#)" (and since September 2008 has been called "Action for Children"). Augustus Bridle's placement appears to have occurred in April 1872, about the time when Stephenson's began to house 24 boys and 4 girls at the [Wheatsheaf Inn](#) in rural Edgeworth, Lancashire. Before that, the Stephenson's children lived in a former factory of the Victoria Stone Company in Bonner Road, Bethnal Green, London. George the blacksmith died at age 84 in 1876, four years after Augustus went to the orphanage. The Bridle family in Canada has an unfinished three-page memoir by Augustus describing his early life. In it he states that *"I went to school in England for about six years until I was ten. They shoved you through there, about ten hours a day. I lived at the school."* Those six years would have been from 1872 to 1878. After that, Augustus's life changed dramatically.

Starting in 1873, Stephenson's orphanage operated a house on eight acres of land in Hamilton, Ontario that had been donated by local citizens as a place to receive and train British orphans who went on to supervised placements with families in the surrounding region (Wentworth County and its neighbors). At that time, orphaned British children were being shipped to the colonies by the hundreds, to earn their keep as farm or other manual laborers, artisans, or domestic servants. The businessman and philanthropist William Eli Sanford, treasurer for Stephenson's Canadian work, himself a former orphan, wrote that such children were the *"most desirable immigrants"* because they had *"no established habits"* and *"with Canadian training and Canadian life they very rapidly assimilate and become the most reliable class of people."*

10-year-old Augustus left England on 13 July 1878 to cross the Atlantic to Quebec in a group of thirty-six children in steerage class aboard the [Dominion Line's Borussia](#). They arrived in Quebec on 25 July 1878. Augustus took with him to Canada a small metal-clad cedar trunk that is now in the care of his grandchildren at a cottage on Whitefish Lake, near Rosseau, Ontario. Inside the lid of that trunk is a painting of hunting dogs in a brook running through a pasture. As Dorset's Blackmore Vale had been the backdrop for an almost-Dickensian start to Augustus's life, one wonders what memories the trunk-lid painting conjured up for him later in life. It may, however, have been a portent of sorts, as he would ultimately help to found a place where some of the most innovative and best-known painters of Canadian landscapes, the Group of Seven, would meet.

Augustus Bridle's first placement in Ontario was with a Mr Stuart, a shoemaker in Merlin (about 45 miles east of Windsor) where he stayed for about a year and a half. The 1881 census of Canada lists him as a "servant" in the household of an American-born

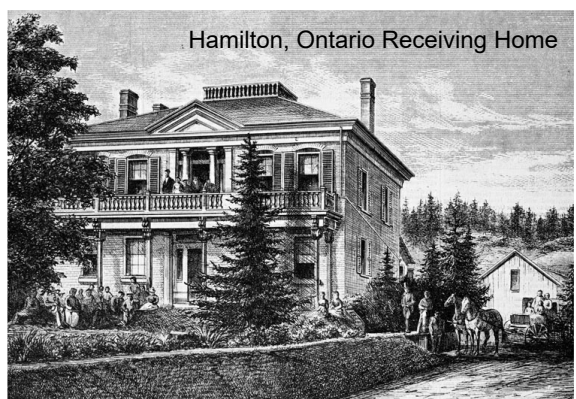
farmer, Richard Smith, in Tilbury East, Kent County. Augustus' nationality is listed as "Scottish" and his age as 15 (he was 13). Two older Smiths, Jacob and Isabella, both aged 49, ran the farm next door, so the two farms may have been worked together as a family effort. The Smith farm has also been described as being near Dealtown (9 miles east of Merlin) and "comprising 100 acres with a large house and barn on it and considerable stock". Augustus worked for Mr Smith until 1885 but his memoir of the time has only one sentence about the experience. His education appears to have been in abeyance while he was at the farm but that changed in 1886 when the 18-year-old Augustus was inspired by a young lady teacher with whom, the family suspects, he fell in love. He re-entered the school system with enthusiasm and his memoir recounts that in 1887:



Augustus's trunk



OLD WHEATSHEAF INN, CONVERTED.
N.C.H.O. EDGEWORTH



"When spring came, I began to get an itch to get my boots and socks off and go barefoot in the fields. I had an idea that the land was the place to be and that some day I would acquire wealth through it, and I liked being out of doors. So in spite of the new things I was learning, I was anxious to go back to the farm."

The lady teacher persuaded him instead to stay in school and to write exams that qualified him to enter high school in Chatham. He records that the following January he *"packed my little trunk and put it on a sleigh and drove to town."* He must have thrived at Chatham Collegiate. *"That first morning as I walked along the street to school with my tin pail, I felt all the exultation and sense of adventure I had felt when I left the farm. I said to myself—it's a good thing they've built this new school because I'm coming to it and this is the real opening day. I had my nerve about me alright,"* he wrote. Augustus won the school's gold medal for highest in general proficiency and a silver medal for highest marks at the second class teacher's exam. After the end of the school year in 1888, he attended the Model School where he obtained a Professional Certificate that allowed him to teach on third class qualifications. By 1889 he was teaching in his own school in Blenheim, Ontario and was elected President of the West Kent Teacher's Association. The 1891 census of Canada enumerated him (aged 23) in the household of James and Elizabeth Howell in Brant North, Brantford. Augustus went on to attend the University of Toronto, from which he graduated with a gold medal in classics. Soon after that, he headed to the Canadian west. He lived in Edmonton, Alberta in 1900 and 1901 and there began a career in journalism with articles for the Liberal-leaning Edmonton Bulletin. A letter written to him on 12 January 1915 by W.E.H. Stokes, who was then editor of the Regina Leader-Post, offers a glimpse of his time in the west. Replying to a note, in which Augustus must have told him about his marriage and the birth of his son Paul, Stokes says:

"I was always a great one for keeping green old memories and friendships, and there is no place where one can get to know a man better than on the trail or in the camp, as we did ... I often sit back, smoking, and recall the incidents of our ever memorable journey down the old Saskatchewan [river]. Do you remember offering those Indians a drink out of the flat quart bottle of Irish, carefully keeping our scows far enough apart that they could not reach it, and taking a long, gurgling horn ourselves? That was a dirty trick! And our anxiety as we broke into the frying pan eleven eggs we found in a wild duck's nest? And poor old Jim, how he sat down with his tail in the calaboose fire on the scow, and how he streaked it overboard for the tall timber? Then the time when on seeking my couch at nine o'clock one morning at the mission I had to turn five fat Berkshire sows of old Matheson's out of my blankets? As these things come to my mind I often laugh outright, and my wife asks what I'm thinking of, and cannot make out why I'm longing to make the trip again in spite of the wet, the discomfort, the hard work and the semi-starvation. You can't make people understand. I feel quite sure of one thing, and that is that no one who saw us on the river would ever have suspected that the microbes of literature were lurking in our systems, and yet I've seen you referred to as one of Canada's best known publicity writers and here I am editing the only truthful journal in the country. To what base uses do we come at last. However, I'm determined to get my little modicum of fun out of life as I go along, although I fear that the future is scarcely likely to hold as much pleasure as the days of Auld Lang Syne."



A feature of the baronial style Main Hall of the Arts and Letters Club in its post-1920 quarters at 14 Elm Street, Toronto was a series of shields bearing the "heraldic arms" of some of the club's prominent members. The shields, designed by Group of Seven artist J.E.H. MacDonald, display a whimsical sense of humor. That for Augustus Bridle depicts the fantastical winged stallion Pegasus being held back by a bridle and wearing blinders emblazoned with the initials "AB".

The river expedition described by Mr Stokes may have had a journalistic purpose. The George Gwynne Mann Family Fonds at the Saskatchewan Archives Board contains two parts of a series of articles about Augustus Bridle's experiences in Cree country 150 miles east of Edmonton while boating down the North Saskatchewan River with at least one other journalist. Augustus returned to Stratford, Ontario in 1901 (the Edmonton Bulletin noted that he received a *"lucrative offer"*) and began to write for the Stratford Herald and later the Toronto News. From 1908 to 1916 he was associate editor of the weekly Canadian Courier, then from 1916 to 1920 he was its editor. In 1910 he published his first book, *"A Backwoods Christmas"*, a homely sketch of how Christmas was observed in Ontario in earlier times. In 1919 he was briefly the editor of Musical Canada, which published from 1907 to 1933. Writing was his source of income throughout his life, but his greatest passion was for music and the arts. He sang for several years in the bass section of the 200-voice Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, founded in 1894 by [A.S. Vogt](#). In his 1963 memoir *"What's Past is Prologue"*, [Vincent Massey](#), the lawyer, diplomat and patron of the arts who became Canada's eighteenth (and first native born) Governor General in 1952, wrote of Augustus' role in the [Arts and Letters Club](#) of which he held the position of Chairman: *"I spent many happy and refreshing hours at the Arts & Letters Club in Toronto. It had, and still has vitality and personality ... The presiding genius of the Club for many years was Augustus Bridle, who fully embodied its spirit. One of his greatest contributions was to lose its constitution so that we were not duly concerned with machinery. The constitution did survive in musical form, having been set to plainsong by Healey Willan."* After the First World War the Arts and Letters Club became a regular gathering place for members interested in literature, architecture, music, painting, sculpture, photography and the stage. Among those who met there regularly were a group of eight landscape artists seeking a new direction for Canadian art – Tom Thomson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Frederick Varley, Frank Johnston, A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris and Franklin Carmichael. Thomson drowned under mysterious circumstances in Algonquin Park in 1917 but the others, known as the ["Group of Seven"](#), became the most important Canadian artists of the first decades of the twentieth century.

In September 1910, Augustus made his second voyage across the ocean to England. This time he travelled first class; the exact nature of his trip is unknown. Was this brief return to England a way to over-write memories of crossing on the tiny Borussia with a more pleasing experience? Was it motivated by a wish to see his country of origin, however briefly; or to learn more about his patrons

at the orphanage? Or did he simply take in the English arts scene while enjoying a first-class two-week holiday there and back? Ironically, in 1911 cousins of his emigrated to Canada and settled in Hamilton! It is unlikely the relatives knew of each other's locations, it is left to speculation if the family in Hamilton wondered about their possible connection to the increasingly well-known Augustus Bridle in Toronto.

On 8 November 1913, aged 45, Augustus married 27-year-old Martha Emily Scroggie, daughter of George Edward Scroggie and Margaret Thompson, in Toronto. Their first son Paul Augustus Bridle was born on 15 October 1914, their second son George Emerson Bridle was born in 1917, and their daughter Margaret Florence Bridle was born on 4 May 1921. In 1916 Augustus published a book "Sons of Canada", thirty-four biographical sketches of prominent men in Canada; including accounts of Prime Ministers Robert Borden and Wilfrid Laurier, of mounted policeman and soldier Sam Steele and of portrait artist Edmund Wyly Grier (whose own drawing of Augustus Bridle c.1910 is shown in this article) In 1921, Augustus followed "Sons of Canada" with "The Masques of Ottawa", written under the pseudonym "Domino".

In 1922 Augustus Bridle began a 30-year association with the Toronto Daily Star as an arts, music, drama and film critic, and book reviewer. He also became an active supporter and promoter of the arts in and around Toronto. Under the auspices of the Star, he organized over a hundred free 'Good Music' concerts (later known as the 'Star Fresh Air Fund' concerts) and several free 'famous music' and carol concerts. He participated in the creation of the [Canadian National Exhibition Chorus](#), a mixed choir of about 2000 members which may have been the largest choir in North America at the time. He may also have been Canada's first radio talk show host. According to John B. Withrow writing in the March/April 1993 edition of the periodical Bravo, the Star opened its first radio station in 1922 at the Canadian National Exhibition. Augustus interviewed important visitors to Toronto in this early, if not the first, radio talk show.

In 1924 Augustus published "[Hansen](#)", a novel about the Canadianization of a Norwegian immigrant whose life clearly follows Augustus's own from the mid-1880's until his marriage in 1913. The "Olaf Hansen" of the book works on an Ontario farm, falls in love with a young teacher, acquires an education that includes a degree from the University of Toronto, then has adventures among the Cree on the Saskatchewan River. The book's preface relates that "*It contains many characters, all but two or three of whom are taken from life, and some of whom reappear at various intervals over a canvas purposely made large, because Canada itself with nine millions of people and ten parliaments is itself a vast sketch in the picture gallery of nations.*"

"Hansen" is a vivid kaleidoscope of the dialects and communities of its time. Parts of the narrative may be jarring to ears attuned to modern political correctness, but it is a time capsule of Canada as seen through an enthusiastic immigrant's eyes two turns of century ago. Midway through the book, the fictitious Hansen, whose formal education began in his late teens in rural Ontario just as Augustus Bridle's had, seeks admission to the University of Toronto on the basis of passing his "Class C" certificate exams. He takes his case for admission to the Bursar of the university:

"Having had experience with a Grand Trunk conductor telling him he was on the wrong train, he was much impressed to find the Bursar a rajah of still greater official solemnity. With the meticulous brevity of a timetable he was informed that his First Class 'C' certificate was invalid for matriculant registration. The Bursar seemed to feel that the said certificate with its red seal of the Department of Education, was a very amateur, if not offensive, document.

'But the papers set were identical to those of the Senior Matric., sir, and I got seventy-five percent.'

'With the important difference that one is headed Education Department of Ontario and the other University of Toronto.'

'But that's only a label, isn't it?'

The Bursar gave him a sub-arctic look.

'A label which cancels the pro tanto,' he said. 'In any case, to enter First Year lectures in January is --- officially impossible.'

'But I intend to plug like sin.'

'In what department do you seek registration?'

'Classics and Political Science --- both.'

The Bursar rose like the little cloud that Elijah saw before a big rain.

'Absolutely unprecedented! Abysmally absurd!'

'Then what do you advise me to do?'

'Write off your senior matric, next June.'

'Is there any bar to my writing on First Year, without lectures if I pay my fees for the full term?'

'My dear sir, you may write a check for one million dollars made out to the University and the Bursar thereof may return it to you just as often, if you include postage. So far as this University is concerned, until you have written the senior matriculation examination, you do not personally exist.'

'Cogito ergo sum', murmured Hansen. Thank you. Well, at least I may pursue my studies of the works specified for First Year in those departments, without paying copyright to the University. May I have a copy of the curriculum?'

The Bursar heaved a sigh and gave him a copy."

Could this tell the story of Augustus's own admission to the University of Toronto, given the reference to that institution in his 1922 "Who's Who" biography?

In 1927 Augustus staged a symbolic pageant "Heart of The World" at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto for an international meeting of the World Federation of Teachers. His article "*Who Writes Our Music?*" in the 15 December 1929 issue of Maclean's magazine was the first comprehensive survey of contemporary Canadian musical composition. In 1940 Augustus formed the Coliseum Chorus, again with the backing of the Star. The chorus gave its first concert on 29 Aug 1940 at the CNE accompanied by the (Edward Franko) [Goldman Band of New York](#). Later that year the chorus sang at Maple Leaf Gardens with the



Augustus Bridle and Martha Scroggie
in 1913

BRIDLE, Augustus—Editor and Special Writer (1) Musical Canada, established 1907; Music Editor, Toronto Daily Star. Born Dorset, England, 1869. Educated: English Schools; Dealtown (Ont.) Public School; Chatham Collegiate; two special undergraduate courses, Classics and English, examinations without lectures; University of Toronto. Came to Ontario, 1878; Farm worker; School Teacher; Choir Leader, Blenheim (Ont.); Edmonton (Alta.), 1900-01; Stratford, 1901-03; Newspaper Writer, Stratford Herald, Toronto News, Edmonton Bulletin, various class papers; Associate Editor, Canadian Courier, 1908-1916; Editor, 1916-1920; Editor, Musical Canada, 1919. Instrumental in organizing the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto, 1908; Secretary Arts and Letters Club, 1908-1913; President, 1913-14; Secretary, 1918 to date. Author of "Sons of Canada," a series of 34 Character Sketches, 1917; "Masques of Ottawa" (Domino) 1921; In Jan., 1922, with co-operation of Daily Star, organized a series of Free Good Music Concerts in Toronto. Married Martha Emily Scroggie, daughter of George E. Scroggie, Nov. 8, 1913; has two sons and one daughter. Club: Arts and Letters. Recreation: Occasional farming. Independent. Residence: 216 Dunn Ave., Toronto, Ont.

Toronto Symphony Orchestra under [Sir Ernest MacMillan](#). It gave six concerts to raise money for war charities before it disbanded in 1942, due to increasing involvement of Canada in war work.

In a note published in the Star on January 5 1952, Augustus mused on the Christmas season that had just passed:

"One week after Christmas is no time for pessimism about ourselves. One trouble with 10 days after Santa Claus becomes a plain citizen again – we often forget what gave Christmas supreme magic. It'll be worse in 1952, so 10 days after the biggest benevolence-event in history isn't a bit too early to recall the incredible ecstasy of Christmas. In America, we've spent [the] best part of a billion dollars in celebration of the event. We began weeks ago to say: 'Oh, Christmas always costs more this year than last. 1951 may be pink. 1952 will be crimson. Anyway, Toronto never knew quite such a Christmas rush as last year. Most of this was for other folks' children. The very-younglings seem to enjoy Santa so – they don't care how many speed laws he breaks getting down so many millions of chimneys ... let alone the flats that don't even have a stovepipe. Well, Christmas ... in any carol's language ... is the greatest benevolence-event of all the other-folk celebrations. Something about the Yuletide spirit that's more abysmally significant than what it costs anybody or either the First or the Fourth of July, or the time of shortest days ... No, it's the Holy Time when we forget all about what it costs – because we remember the light that dawned in any child's eyes a week before the Santa Claus Parade in November made time seem such a luxury ... because every day brought Christmas nearer."

That Christmas of 1951 was his last. On 19 November 1952 he was struck by a motor vehicle (some reports say a car, others a bus, others a truck) near Bloor and Sherbourne streets in Toronto, and was taken to hospital for treatment. Contemporary accounts say that no bones were broken, but the 84-year-old was in shock. He returned home but died on 21 December. His funeral service was held at the Arts and Letters Club two days later. Augustus is buried in the [Park Lawn Cemetery](#) in Toronto. The Arts and Letters Club newsletter of January 1953 reported that:

"The death of Augustus Bridle, 'Gus' or 'Dear old Gus' to so many leaves a gap in the Arts and Letters Club that can never be filled ... Gus possessed [a] great driving force and the power of kindling and fanning the flames of enthusiasm in others, causing them to do great things with few tools. Members of the Club who in the early years got busy and grey-washed the walls at Court Street, cleaned the windows and hung up the cheesecloth curtains, carried up the firewood and cleaned their hands under difficulties, and afterwards carried out musical and dramatic efforts with spontaneity and zest, found 'Gus' always in the midst or at the head of things ... His interests outside of the Club in Art, Music and Literature were many and the numerous tributes in the press from all classes of writers testify to the inherent sanity of his artistic judgments and the value of his critical advice to generations of workers in the arts."

Augustus left a lasting legacy through the Arts and Letters Club which continues to this day as an important gathering place for arts professionals and arts lovers in Toronto. Another part of his legacy is his family. [Paul Augustus Bridle](#), Augustus's first son, was educated at the University of Toronto, receiving his BA in 1937. He then taught briefly at Upper Canada College before joining the Canadian Navy in World War II. Paul Augustus Bridle joined the Canadian diplomatic service and served in several senior capacities in the Canadian High Commission to Newfoundland at the time when Newfoundland became part of Canada. In that role he played a significant part in the negotiations with [Joey Smallwood](#) over the detailed terms of Newfoundland's entry into Confederation.

Augustus' first sight of land in North America as a 10-year-old aboard the 'Borussia' was probably the coast of Newfoundland (if the children were able to look out at all on those voyages). It adds to the pathos of his tale that if that 10-year old with the little trunk did glimpse the Newfoundland coast on that voyage, how inexplicable it would have seemed to him that his own son might grow up to play an important role in making that very coastline one day part of Canada. That 10-year-old boy was destined to be, in a sense, a latter-day Grandfather of Confederation!

"Hansen" is really a story about realizing Canadian aspirations both personally and for a young country. In the transition from Augustus' humble birth to Paul's diplomacy, real life even exceeded the fictional story.

From BHCARA: Of the hundreds of British Home Children stories the BHCARA has researched, written about, reviewed or heard of, Augustus was certainly one of the most, if not the most, accomplished and influential BHC to Canadian history. It is our honour to have been chosen to share his incredible story.

Exhibit in England by Fegans'



[Season's of Change
exhibit information](#)

[Forgotten information](#)

9th February - 9th June 2018 :

Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery

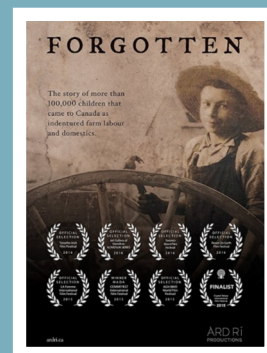
Civic Centre, Mount Pleasant Rd,

Tunbridge Wells TN1 1JN

**Featuring the acclaimed
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For a short time, "Forgotten" can be viewed on Ontario's TVO website. Click on the icon to the right to view this film. Viewing range is limited. "Forgotten" is also available at [Amazon.ca](#)



Delaney family reunited after 130 years apart

By
Lori
Oschefski

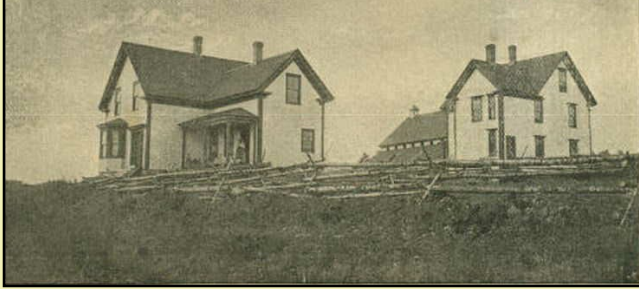
Emma Stirling was one of the over thirty organizations or persons responsible for the mass immigration of the British Home Children to Canada. Her work was founded in Edinburgh, Scotland; starting with a small day nursery for impoverished children. From the day nursery grew various homes Emma opened where she could house needy or homeless children. The running of the homes was overseen by a Board of Directors which took on the name “Edinburgh and Leith Children's Aid and Refuge Society”(ELCARS”).

Overburdened with needy children, Emma started the emigration of children to Aylesford, Nova Scotia, in 1886. In her very first party of children was little six year old Robina Delaney. Robina's brother James followed later that year.

Twenty-two-year old widower, Arthur Delaney, at his wit's end, applied to Emma in December of 1882 for care for his three young children. His wife, Mary, had died six months before and Arthur felt that he was unable to care for his children adequately. Emma admitted the children, keeping them in one of her homes for almost four years. Arthur visited his children periodically and when he could not, his mother and sister visited them. Arthur maintained a payment for their care until the loss of his job made that impossible. Children for whom payments were not made and who were not being visited regularly, were considered, by Emma, to have been abandoned. Therefore, she felt she could make decisions for them. She claimed, wrongly, that Arthur had abandoned his children. Brought to Canada without his consent, Emma, was soon ordered by the courts to return the Delaney children to Scotland, which she did forthwith. What



The Farmer's House and the Boy's House, 1888
Emma Stirling's Homes, Hillfoot Farm, Aylesford, Nova Scotia



Emma did not do was relinquish the children to their father's custody once back in Scotland. Nor did she allow him to visit them. She did not even let the ELCARS Board of Directors know where the children were! By March of 1887, court proceeding lagging, Emma took advantage of the lull, claiming it was a sign Arthur had once again, in her opinion, abandoned his children. She picked up all three children this time, including sister Annie, changed the children's last name to “Whitehead” and smuggled them out of Scotland and back to Canada. Arthur continued the fight for his children, and in 1889 Emma was ordered by the courts to return Arthur's children to him. Emma claimed she did not know where the children were and that she had exhausted all efforts to find them. The court believed her. Based on new evidence just found, the indisputable truth here is that Emma perjured herself in court. The children, by September of 1890 were taken across the American border and placed in the Cayuga Home for Children. Arthur sued the ELCARS for damages for the loss of his children in 1892 (as they were deemed primarily responsible for the children), and was awarded £100. No sooner did he have this money, then the disparaging father made a trip to Canada to find his children. Sadly he returned home without them. Arthur never found his children, he never saw them again. Ever. He had fought for his children for nearly eight years. He died a broken man in 1907, coincidentally the same year of Emma's death.

130 years later the descendants of Arthur, through a second marriage, have never been able to find their missing family members, despite many attempts. Pat Dishon recently released her book “The Delaneys of Edinburgh - Based on a True Story” on Amazon. I purchased a copy in the fall of 2017. In November I posted about the Scottish children who were sent to Canada in a Facebook Group. Shortly after a shocked reporter from the Scotsman in Scotland, Alison Campsie, contacted me. She had never heard of the BHC, and wished to write an article about them. We enjoyed a very long “FaceTime” interview, in which I told her of Emma Stirling and the Delaney Children. She showed a considerable interest in this story so I put her in contact with Pat. “[The 15,000 Scots Children Shipped to Canada](#)” was published, and a week later the article which cracked the case was published. “[A family's 130-year hunt for its children missing in Canada](#)”. It renewed a lot of interest in the Delaney story. Talking about this at lunch with Pat, Rosalind Newlands became very intrigued the story. Always up for a good family history challenge, she felt compelled to begin a search. Working on the site “[Family Search](#)” she found a family in the 1920 census, living in Cayuga, New York. It was thought that the children might have been taken to the United States. The father in this census report, James Delaney, gave his birth country as Scotland; claimed his parentage was Scottish, and his immigration year was 1887. Two of his children were named Arthur and Annie, consistent with the names in the Delaney family. Rosalind feeling in her heart this was our James, made inquiries. To our immense pleasure, a Michael Delaney responded, confirming he indeed was the Great Grandson of Arthur Delaney of Scotland. Michael tells this story:

Cayuga County Home

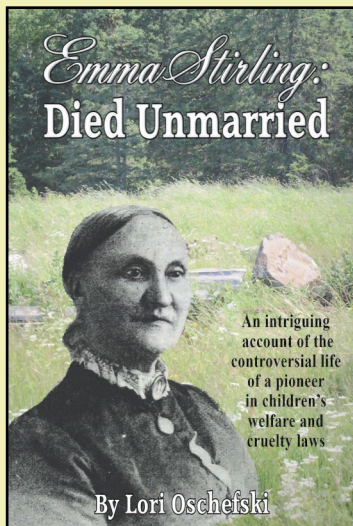


“In our family we were told that James and his sister were dropped at

Cayuga County Home by their “aunt” who had kidnapped them and brought them to the USA. The aunt had decided that she no longer wanted them and dropped them at the home. She had changed their names from DELANEY to WHITEHEAD when they went through Ellis Island”.

Michael was shocked to find out the truth behind James's immigration to the States. The family quickly retrieved the children's records from the orphanage in Auburn, Cayuga County, New York. They show that at the time Emma was summoned by the courts in Canada to disclose the whereabouts of the children, they were gathered up and brought to the United States. Sadly, we now know that Annie passed away from tuberculosis and is buried in the orphanage cemetery; even sadder, not under her real name. Rosalind continues to search for Robina, whose name had been changed, once again, to Bessie Tisdale. Bessie was “adopted” by James and Sarah Tisdale of Homer, Cortland County, New York. Sarah and James lost their eight-year-old daughter Florence to scarlet fever, exactly one year before they took Bessie, who was the same age as their daughter. The last known whereabouts of Bessie is from Sarah's 1918 obituary, Bessie is unmarried and living in Texas. Pat and Michael are overjoyed that their family, torn apart 130 years ago has been reunited. They have great hopes that Bessie's story will also be complete soon. The Scotsman published the third story in January 2018, “[Ecstatic end to 130-year hunt for children lost in Canada](#)”

Forthcoming is my second book entitled “Emma Stirling - Died Unmarried”. It is an intriguing account of the life of Emma Stirling. A rather controversial character, she was at the forefront of the children's anti-cruelty movement which swept through the UK in the mid 1880's. The Delaney story, told in detail, is one of the many questions answered surrounding Emma. A lot has been written about her fiery end to child migration, but where did she come from, who really was Emma Stirling, and did she really live out her life in “obscurity” with the Quakers? The book is due to be released in late 2018/spring 2019. I promise you will be astonished!



OFFICIAL BOOK LAUNCH

Sunday July 22, 2018 - Kitchener, Ontario



MARJORIE: HER WAR YEARS



Author Patricia Skidmore is thrilled to announce the launch of her new book "Marjorie: Her War Years"

Sequel to the highly acclaimed "Marjorie: Too Afraid to Cry"

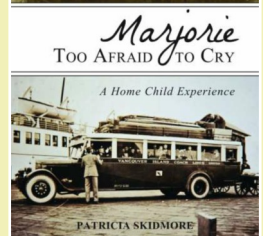
Marjorie Arnison (1926-2017) was one of the more than 100,000 children who were deported to Canada to provide cheap labour and white stock.

Marjorie and three siblings were removed from their mother's care in February 1937, and they were placed in the Middlemore Emigration Home in Birmingham. In September 1937, ten-year-old Marjorie and her nine-year-old brother Kenny were sent to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School near Cowichan Station on Vancouver Island B.C., Canada. Their eight-year-old sister Audrey (aka Bunny) followed in August 1938. Their eleven-year-old sister was left behind at Middlemore. It was to their mother's eternal distress that she lost three of her children to Canada.

Marjorie was always at 'war' with the loss of her family. Her new 'home' was on an isolated farm. She was placed in a cottage with ten to twelve other girls, headed by a cottage 'mother.' Cottage mothers had complete control over the children in their cottage. "Some of them were real bitches. Some of them? No most of them. They were bitches from hell." (Marjorie, January 2014.)

Survival became essential, but it came with a loss. Marjorie turned inward and found a strength that pulled her through, but she had to lock away her childhood memories in order to endure her new life. Marjorie was well into her senior years before those memories surfaced.

"Marjorie: Her War Years" follows Marjorie through her five years of incarceration at the farm school and ends in the fall of 1942, when she is placed out by the Fairbridge Society as a domestic servant once she turned 16.



The official launch of "Marjorie: Her War Years" will be held at the:



2018 BHC Family Reunion

Sunday July 22, 2018 Event starts at 12:30 pm

Waterloo Region Museum and Doon Heritage Village
10 Huron Road, Kitchener, Ontario N2P 2R7

Canada's NEW National British Home Child Day



© Lori Oschefski

Through the initiative of Judy Nevell of Finch, Ontario., her quest for a National British Home Child Day has reached the fruition. Efforts, supported by all our BHC groups, have been underway since 2017 to introduce a bill expanding on the provincial BHC Day in Ontario and Nova Scotia - September 28th. Motion 133 introduced early last year by Guy Lauzon, Member of Parliament for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry year reads:

28 SEPT

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions made by the over 100,000 British Home Children to Canadian society, their service to our armed forces throughout the twentieth century, the hardships and stigmas that many of them endured, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon the story of

the British Home Children for future generations by declaring September 29 of every year, British Home Child Day in Canada.

The motion was debated on [Wednesday, November 22, 2017](#) at a robust session. It was very encouraging to see so many MP's take part in this debate. It is testimony to the hard work being done across Canada to raise awareness of our British Home Children. The final debate on Motion 133 was heard on [Thursday February 1, 2018](#). Prior to the debate, a special screening of Eleanor McGrath's film "Forgotten" was held on Queen Street, hosted by Mr. Lauzon. Several Members of Parliament attended this screening.

Voting on the motion was held in the House of Commons on February 7, 2018. Bill M-133 passed with an overwhelming 294 yeses and zero nays. To the absolute delight of BHC descendants across Canada, a national day of recognition for our BHC has finally been achieved.

BHC Day in Ontario was accomplished through the initiative of then MP Jim Brownell, brother to Judy. September 28 was chosen because that was the day their Grandmother, 13 year old Mary Scott Pearson arrived in Canada. Read Art Joyce's article "[Canada Now Has a National British Home Child Day](#)"

2018 BHC Family Reunion

Sunday July 22, 2018

Waterloo Region Museum and Doon Heritage Village
10 Huron Road, Kitchener, Ontario N2P 2R7

Special Film Screening

Film Producer Donald Gray with a special screening of his film

Nobody's child : Canada's home children

(Lockwood Films London, Ontario)

& FEATURING a special performance by

Cambridge, Ontario composer and singer Allison Lupton

allisonlupton.com Other participants TBA

Book Launch!

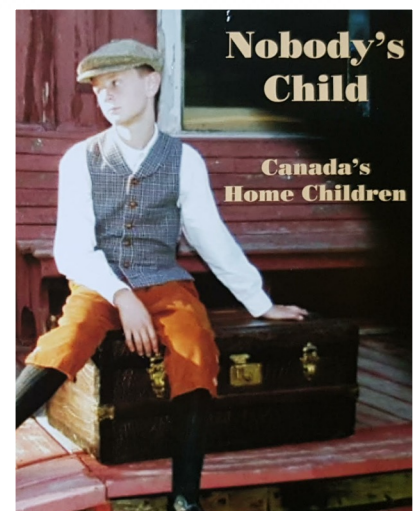
Patricia Skimore is thrilled to announce the official launch of her new book, "Marjorie: Her War Years, at this summer event! See page 7 of this newsletter for information!

[To pre-register and purchase BCHARA tickets](#)

[Visit our Facebook Event Page for more details](#)



PLEASE
NOTE



Cost: Regular admittance to the Village \$11 Adults, \$8 Seniors and children above 5. Children under 4 are free. Prices plus tax.

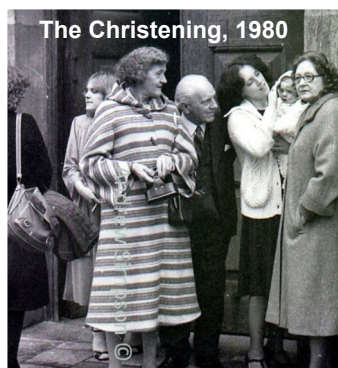
BHCARA Registration fee: \$8
Adults, \$6 Children

Park admittance is to be paid at the Village on the event day. BHCARA has a separate registration fee and tickets can be pre-purchased.

Finding my voice telling my story

Now when your day job is research and telling stories about the past it is easy to forget that for many people finding out about their history and writing it down does not come easy.

At its most basic there is that simple problem of knowing where to look, and then navigating the many different bits of official records, as well as knowing which bits of the media will help and finally putting all that research into a historical and family context.



The Christening, 1980

And that maybe the easy bit, because the most daunting task can be how to tell that story.

For some this is the biggest challenge. The last time they picked up a pen to write an extended piece of writing may have been in school and for some of them that was not a happy experience.

The task is then compounded by their own lack of self confidence believing that they are not up to it, what they write will be poorly received and finally that no one will want to know what a retired bus driver, shop assistant or nursery nurse has to say.

The reverse is of course the truth and I have become fascinated by a new writing project which is being run by my old friend Lois Elsdon.

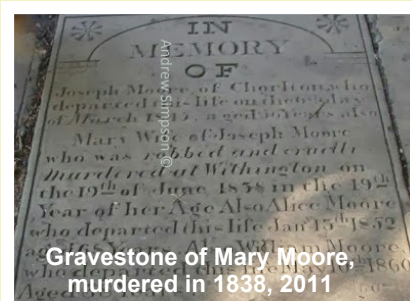
Lois has written all her life, is a published author and now runs regular writing classes, and recently began to explore how people can be helped to produce their own life stories.

It was a natural outcome, given that some of her novels involve a lead character who as part of the plot needs to research his family.

The classes cover some of the basic research skills but quickly move on to how these can be applied to writing and two of her favourite props are a plastic washing up bowl and an electric iron.

Go back just over half a century and many of us will remember that the bowl was made of tin and that knocking around at the back of the cupboard was an old heavy duty metal iron which was heated over a stove or by the fire.

And each time the items appear, they bring forth a wave of memories which grow in the telling and as they are shared so does the awareness of just how hard wash day was.



Gravestone of Mary Moore, murdered in 1838, 2011

It started with heating water in a coal fired copper, then washing each item using a block of soap, before manually wringing them out in the mangle and if the weather were bad hanging the clothes across the kitchen. All of which was followed the day after by ironing. Most families had more than one iron, so while the first was in use, the second was heating by the fire. They were heavy and you needed to wrap a cloth around the metal handle.

Later the arrival of the first electric irons made life a little easier but were powered by a cable which went directly into a light fitting challenging the ability of the fuse box to deliver.

In the lively discussions that follow each of the participants begin to see that these are valid memories more so because they are common to others in the room and from that comes a joint recognition of how important they are to understanding the lives of their parents and grandparents.

All of which is but a skip and a jump into writing at length and with confidence about those family lives buttressed by their own research.

And that is a form of empowerment, which starts with giving them a voice, and continues as a thousand stories.

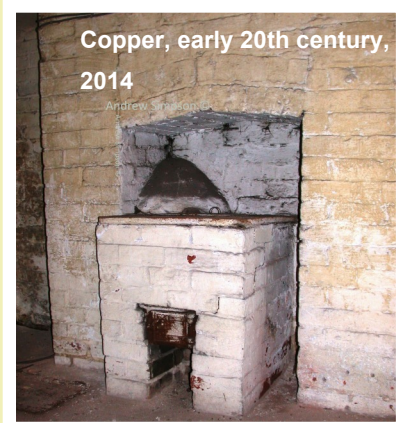
It is, I suspect how many of us got started in the study of British Home Children.

So what began as a disjointed discovery of a relative born elsewhere, becomes the need to "do the research" and then commit that life to paper adding another name and chapter to the continuing story of BHC.

For many, that also demands researching the bigger picture, so that the life of the young ten year old from a workhouse in Manchester or an orphanage in rural Somerset can be afforded a context in which to understand why they were migrated.

And that will not only add to our collective understanding of what went on, but will contribute to our own family history and the way we regard those who went before us.

*Writing About Your Family History, Lois Elsdon, <https://loiseldon.com/tag/writing-family-history/>



Copper, early 20th century, 2014



Manchester 1979
.... there is always a story

Sunday, April 15th from 2:30 – 4 p.m

Vancouver BC Event

British Home Children: Uncovering the Hidden Stories

The BHCARA is thrilled to be collaborating
with the Vancouver Public Library and acclaimed
Canadian Authors Beryl Young and Patricia Skidmore
to bring our British Home Children's story to
Vancouver British Columbia!
Join Beryl and Pat on April 15- 2018!

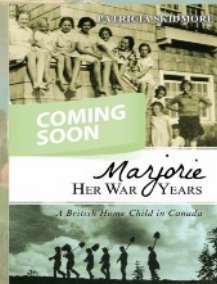
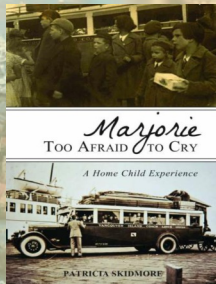
Vancouver Public Library
Main Branch
350 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 6B1

Charlie

A Home Child's Life in Canada



Beryl Young



Patricia Skidmore and Beryl Young both grew up not realizing their parents were child migrants. They will discuss the BHC and how they discovered and researched the surprising stories of their parents.

Patricia Skidmore is the author of Marjorie Too Afraid to Cry and Marjorie: Her War Years, to be released in the Spring of 2018. Patricia Skidmore is a daughter of a British child migrant. Researching the layers of British child migration has enabled her to understand her mother and her family's role in this incredible 350-year-history of Britain shipping children to the colonies.

Beryl Young is the author of the best-selling Charlie: a Home Child's Life in Canada. This book is her BHC Father's story.

upcoming EVENTS

MARCH, APRIL & MAY 2018

Double
Header

Saturday and Sunday April 7th and 8th.

SATURDAY

April 7th at the Harriston Library

88 Mill Street, Harriston Ont N0G 1Z0)

7:15 p.m.

Sunday

Sunday, April 8th at 2:00 p.m.

Aboyne Hall

Wellington County Museum and Archives
building

Everyone is welcome, free admission and refreshments available.

Etobicoke Probus Club

Thursday March 15, 2018 - speaker start 10 am
Weston Golf and Country Club, 50 St. Phillips Rd
(Royal York/Dixon)

Bracebridge Probus Club

Wednesday April 4, 2018 meeting start 9:30 am
Bracebridge Sportsplex
110 Clearbrook Trail, Bracebridge



SPECIAL EVENT

Kitchener Public Library Genealogy Fair
Saturday April 21

85 Queen Street North, Kitchener
Dan Oatman, Donna Diebel & Lori Oschefska
Ms. Oschefska will be speaking on the BHC -
Time to be announced
Day long exhibit table
<http://www.kpl.org/genealogy-fair>

Colonel John Butler (CJB) Branch of the United
Empire Loyalists Association of Canada
Saturday May 5, 2018 11:45 am

Betty's Restaurant
8921 Sodom Road in Chippawa, Niagara Falls

Champlain Seniors Service Club

Tuesday, May 8, 2018. 10 am start
Canadian Legion in Orillia
215 Mississauga St E, Orillia, ON L3V 1W2

Wasaga Beach Men's Probus Club

Thursday, May 10, 2018
Wasaga Stars Arena, 425 River Road West Wasaga
Beach

More information: Info@britishhomechildren.com

Home Children in Music

Kingston, Ontario premieres the opera "Barnardo Boy" in 1982



In the late 1970's James Cole, coordinator of the arts for the Frontenac County Board of Education had a radical new idea for an opera, something which would involve Kingston Symphony Association and the school board. Cole who had previously worked with the renowned composer Clifford Crawley, approached him with his idea. Enthusiastically they approached author David Helwig, to write the libretto. Helwig, not very enthusiastic at first, said he would "think about it", and think about it he did.

Helwig's home town is Niagara-on-the-Lake, and he had visited the site of the Maria Rye receiving home. Two books were on the market at this time, "The Little Immigrants" by Kenneth Bagnell and Phyllis Harrison's "The Home Children". From that grew the opera entitled "Barnardo Boy". Crawley, having been raised in England, knew Barnardo Boys from school.

"Barnardo Boy" was not the first musical representation of the Barnardo children. Andrew Lloyd Webber's first collaboration with lyricist Tim Rice was "The Likes of Us", a 1965 musical based on the true story of Dr. Barnardo. The musical failing to find backing, was not performed until it was staged at Andrew Lloyd Webber's Sydmonton Festival on 9 July 2005.

Critically Acclaimed Pianist Derek Paravicini, was born in England in 1979, to Nicolas Paravicini and Mary Ann Parker Bowles. He is a blind, autistic savant and musical prodigy. Derek has an absolute pitch and can play a piece of music after hearing it only once. He began playing piano at the age of two and at nine, performed with the Royal Philharmonic Pops Orchestra. Derek was presented with the Barnardo Children's Champion Award by Diana, Princess of Wales: fitting as Derek is the Great Great Grandson of Dr. Thomas Barnardo. His Great Grand Parents were William Somerset Maugham and Syrie Barnardo (then Wellcome by marriage), daughter of Dr. Barnardo. Their union produced one child, a daughter, Mary Elizabeth Maugham. Liza, as she was called, married Lt.-Col. Vincent Rudolph Paravicini. Nicolas was their first child. Derek's mother, Mary Ann Parker Bowles is the sister of the ex husband of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, making her his Aunt through marriage. Upon meeting Princess Diana, after days of practicing "Your Royal Highness" Derek asked her straight away if she wanted to feel his wart. To which she respectfully answered "Well maybe later".

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Likes_of_Us

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/is/2007-v28-n1-is2474/019293ar.pdf>

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jan-rubes-enc/>

["Shaking The Family Tree!" Derek Nicolas Somerset Paravicini](#)

Kingston premiere for Barnardo Boy

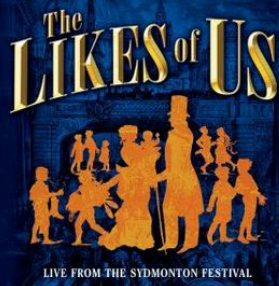
In May, the world première of the full-length opera *Barnardo Boy* was staged in Kingston, Ontario, at the Grand Theatre.

The opera, written by composer *Clifford Crawley*, with libretto by poet and novelist *David Helwig*, is based on a true segment of Canadian history during which Dr. Barnardo, an English physician, would take needy children off the streets of London and send them to Canada to settle.

The star of the cast of seventy-five will be *Jan Rubes*, the well-known operatic *basso profundo*.

By
Lori Oschefski

Lyrics by Tim Rice Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber



Join Speaker Dan Oatman in Sarnia, Ontario

British Home Children--Sharing the Stories

Mallroad Library, 1362 Lambton Mall Rd., Sarnia, Ontario

On Wed. April 18, 2018 pm at 6:30 pm.

Speakers

Join Speaker John Jefkins in Richmond Hill



The century-long family secret ... and a 30-minute unravelling | Toronto Star
Looking to find out more about his father's past as a home child sent to Ontario, John Jefkins discovers the family in Britain he never knew existed.

Click here for
John's BHC story

Monday March 19, 2018
Richmond Hill Historical
Society

7:30 pm
at the

Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church
10066 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON
L4C 1T8



DESCENDANTS

corner

© 2018, Ann Griffin. Ann is an author and BHC descendant. This article is an excerpt from her in-progress novel, titled *The Home Boy*, loosely based on her grandfather's story. Ann's first novel, *Another Ocean to Cross*, set in WWII, is currently available on Amazon and other outlets. She and her husband divide their time between Mesa, Arizona, and Toronto, Ontario. To be added to her newsletter mailing list, email her at info@anngriffinwriter.com.



With
Ann
Griffin

THE VISITOR

By Ann Griffin

When I got home, summat was wrong. A gentleman, dressed in a fine suit with a fancy hat in his hand, was talking to me Mum, and Mum looked right worried.

I hesitated in the doorway, but Mum waved me in.

"Walter, this 'ere's Mr. Middlemore. Mr. Middlemore, this is me son Walter we was discussin'."

I didn't like the sound of that but I tugged my cap an' said, "'Allo, guv'nor." I turned to Mum an' handed her the bread and ha'penny. She smiled, that tired smile of hers, an' patted me arm.

"Walter, stay 'ere an' listen to what the man has to say."

He looked like a rich man, an' I distrusted 'im right off. I scowled but stood still an' waited.

He cleared 'is throat an' tried to smile.

"Walter," he began, "Your mother and I have been chatting about your family circumstances and how hard life is for all of you."

Wot's 'circumstances?' I wondered, and scowled some more.

"Walter, have you ever thought of your future? Would you be interested in a life where you can be your own man, and live respectably, perhaps as a farmer, and not have to go hungry?"

I gazed 'at him, me mouth open wide.

"Aye, sir. Anyone what lives 'ere dreams of livin' somewhere better."

"But it's very difficult to achieve such a thing here when everything seems to work against you. Is that right?"

I was suspicious, but I nodded, with a little frown, just to let 'im know I wasn't to be taken in too easily.

He leaned forward and put his hands on his knees. "There are some kind Christian people here in Birmingham who wish to give you and others just that chance."

Me spine was tingling. I was interested in spite of meself.

"I came to offer your mother the chance for you to have a better life and learn a respectable trade. Your mother tells me you are quite a sharp lad, despite your lack of schooling."

"I learned me letters and numbers at Sunday school, sir." I didn't want 'im to think I was an uneducated lout.

"Very good, very good. I'm sure you'll do well if you can attend a regular school. The only catch is, you would have to come with me. Your mother would have to let you go to allow you to succeed."

The tinglin' came back, worse. I could 'ardly breathe.

"No! I can't leave me mum!" I tried to get past 'im to where the others was cowerin' in a corner, wonderin' what was goin' on, but Mum grabbed me arm an' hissed in me ear.

"You stay and you listen. Be respectful." It was her no-nonsense voice.

"I understand, it's very hard to think of leaving your family, isn't it, Walter?"

He had no idea. He didn't wait for me to answer, though.

"Here's how it will happen. Your mother will sign some papers, and you will come with me to a new home, where you will have clean clothing, shoes, and three good meals each day. Then, in a few months, you'll be put on a big ship with other lads, and sent to Canada. Once you are there, a respectable family will take you in. You'll work to earn your keep, and attend school, and when you are eighteen you'll have a little sum of money to start out on your own."

Me mind was reelin'. Canada? I'd heard of it, but weren't it a colony across the ocean, thousands of miles away? I'd never see me Mum or brothers or sisters again. But to be clean, and have enough to eat, an' not have to steal. That would be summat. Mum wanted me to go, I could tell from the way her eyes bored into me. I went and hid behind the stove, with the baby, John, and little Emily, who'd been listening to us talking. Me belly was in a knot. Who would protect the little ones from Dad when he stomped about, roarin' and whippin' off his belt to beat Mum? And where would this Middlemore chap take me? I know I stole that loaf of bread, but I didn't think anyone saw me. Maybe somehow, he found out and he'd take me to jail. Me hands was sweatin' an' I was shakin' all over, like I 'ad the chills. If Mum didn't want me anymore, I think I'd like to die. I was only eight years old.

"Now Mrs. Lewis," Middlemore was saying, "You know you just can't go on, dear, don't you? Look at all these little ones, none with enough to eat, and wearing only rags. Three of them are ill, and you don't look at all well yourself, I must say."

Mum started cryin'. We saw plenty o' that when Pa came home drunk, which was most of the time. Her voice sounded like a kitten's mewing.

"I know you're right, sir, but he's me son and I can't bear to part with him."

"Think of it this way, Mrs. Lewis. He'll have plenty to eat and drink, fresh air, clean clothes, and best of all, he'll go to school. Come now, surely you can see it's for the best."

There's four lads in our family and I'm the oldest. Then there's Tommy, who's five, Ronnie is four, and John, the baby, is two. Me two sisters are Sarah, who's nine, and Emily, who's only three. I held tight to Emily. Mum was talking again, twisting her handkerchief in her hand and lookin' like to fall over.

"An' can I get 'im back again when I'm better situated? If I agree?"

"Oh, certainly, you may do that. And you can write him letters anytime you like." He smiled and tapped a finger against his cheek.

"What if I change me mind?"

"Well, Mrs. Lewis, you do have to give us a chance, and we'll not be letting him come back until the family is doing much better. For his sake, you understand."

Mum's voice wobbled. "I should like to discuss it with Mr. Lewis, when he comes 'ome, if you don't mind."

"Actually, I'm not sure that's such a good idea, my dear. Your husband's likely to be having a bit of a tipples tonight, isn't he?" He pushed some papers across the table towards Mum.

Mum nodded, squeezing her eyes shut and clenching her fists. Why did he have to make me Mum feel so bad?

"Then let me take him now. I promise we'll take good care of him, and he'll have such opportunities you can't even dream." He bent over to look Mum in the eye. Mum swallowed, and then nodded, picked up the pen he gave her, and wrote on the papers.

"All right. You can 'ave 'im. But mind you treat 'im well!" She turned around and looked right at me. I felt somethin' hard inside me belly as I sat Emily on the floor.

"Walter, come 'ere, love." She smiled at me, but it was the kind of smile grown-ups make when they want you to think everything's fine, but really it isn't. I walked as slowly as I could up to her, hung my head and looked at my feet. I was ready to cry myself.

She lifted my chin. "Look at me, son. This gentleman is going to take you to a special 'ome where you'll have all you want to eat, and clean clothes, and he's promised you may go to school." She smiled brightly through her flushed face. "What do you say to that?"

"I don't want to leave you, Mum." I embarrassed myself by snuffling, then wiped the tears and snot with my sleeve.

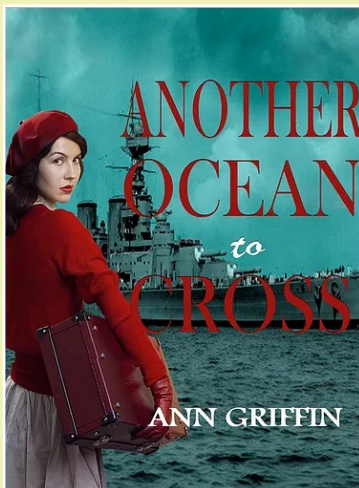
"And I don't want you to leave, either, darling, but I want you to 'ave a better life than this."

"We'd better be going, then, Walter." Mr. Middlemore picked up his hat. His shiny boots were dusty now. "Get your things and come along."

I had nothing to take. Mum gave me a hug and a kiss. I kissed Emily and Sarah, and gave little John a squeeze. Mr. Middlemore took my hand and led me away.

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used with permission.

www.fontspace.com/fz/descendants



Ann Griffin's new release: Another Ocean to Cross

When war tears life apart, saving family becomes the only goal that matters.

Munich, Germany, 1938. After talented Jewish teen artist and secret activist Renata Lowenthal is beaten by police, she convinces her father, a doctor stripped of his right to practice, that the family must flee.

After a harrowing journey that separates them, the family reunites in a refugee camp near Alexandria, Egypt. Renata uses her artistic talent to get her parents out of the camp and settled in Alexandria, where Renata tries to improve her family's odds of survival by marrying Ray, a Canadian officer in the Royal Navy, who is sent to war before their child is born. After Ray is injured in battle, Renata makes the tough decision to leave her young son and tap a resourcefulness and courage she never knew she had to save her marriage and her family.

Part adventure and part love story, loosely based on true events and still relevant today, this story, which will appeal to readers of Lilac Girls, The Nightingale, and Beneath a Scarlet Sky, brings into focus the heartbreaking impact of war on refugee families.

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