



Anglo-Celtic Roots

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In This Issue

A Valiant Man

***He Wore Two Blue Coats:
William Henry Northwood***

***Acting Lance Corporal John Samuel Thomson
Army Service Corps***

Standalone Genealogy Applications



Anglo-Celtic Roots

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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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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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Cover Illustration: Group of 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays), troopers, 1914.

Source: britishempire.co.uk.

From the Editor:



Military history is featured in this issue, which includes two family stories from the 30th anniversary

writing competition.

First, Lynne Willoughby recounts the brief military career of her great-uncle, Brinley Chaplin, who joined the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays) in 1915–16. Wounded in 1917, he returned to England for treatment but sadly died from infection.

John Reid's story follows his great-great-grandfather, William Northwood, who deserted his family in Liverpool, England, in 1866. After exhaustive research, John traced him to the U.S. Army—serving in the Wild West!

From the chaplain's journal of the WWI No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station comes an account of Acting Lance Corporal John Samuel Thomson of the Royal Army Service Corps, who died when his munitions convoy was hit by shellfire.

This quarter's Tech Talk discusses the range of standalone genealogy software available to researchers.

A stylized signature in blue ink.

Paul Cripwell

From the President



Another calendar year is drawing to a close—and what a year 2025 has been! For BIFHSGO, it was a mix of ups and downs. The highlights included a terrific program and an excellent annual conference, while the main challenge was, and continues to be, the shortage of volunteers for the Board.

Nevertheless, I remain constantly amazed by the energy and professionalism of our existing volunteers. My sincere thanks to all of you for your exceptional efforts throughout the past year.

You may be as surprised as I am to see a president's column from me again! The shortage of volunteers, particularly for the program director position, prompted some changes on the Board. Dianne Brydon offered to step down as president and return to the program director role she had so ably filled in the past. That left a gap, and, as past president, I was the logical choice to step in. So here I am again, writing another president's column for *Anglo-Celtic Roots*.

Our annual conference in October—*Researching the Disadvantaged of England and Wales*—had wide appeal, as disadvantaged people have always existed throughout Britain, not just in England and Wales. Holding the event virtually kept costs low and our nine expert speakers were outstanding. I hope you were able to attend and found the sessions both interesting and informative.

As the year closes, please remember to renew your BIFHSGO membership before the end of the year; if you have already renewed, thank you. Donations are also always welcome—to help either with general Society expenses or the research fund that supports periodic research projects. The former library fund has been closed, as BIFHSGO's collection is now part of the Ontario Ancestors Ottawa Branch library.

In closing, I wish you all Happy Holidays, a stocking filled with chips from your broken brick walls—and a happy, healthy New Year!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Duncan Monkhouse".

Duncan Monkhouse

Family History Research

A Valiant Man

BY LYNNE WILLOUGHBY



Lynne started her genealogical research in the 1980s, joined BIFHSGO in 2005 and is a current member of the Writing Group. She acts as “techie” to their Zoom gatherings and attends the BIFHSGO Drop-in Chats. She has written some articles for ACR about her Welsh and Irish ancestors and has managed to break

down a few brick walls as a result of her membership in BIFHSGO. Lynne wishes she had more time to go

down more genealogical rabbit holes to find more family stories she can write about.

When I was 14, I went to live for a spell in Scotland with my parents and siblings and for the first time met my mother’s family who lived in Wales. My mom and dad met and married during the Second World War and mom came to Canada in 1946. She had three brothers, one of whom she sometimes called Jim and at other times, Brinley. I grew up thinking she had four brothers—until I met them, at which time I realized that my Uncle Jim and Brinley were, in fact, the same person. It wasn’t until 2007 that I discovered that Brinley was my uncle’s middle name and also a popular name in my mother’s family.

Mom’s brother Jim’s given name was actually Chandos Brinley Williams. He was named Chandos after his father, and Brinley after Brinley Chaplin, the brother of his mother—my grandmother, Elizabeth. Some of Jim’s cousins from that side of the family were also named after that uncle. Great-uncle Brinley Chaplin had died in the Great War and I learned was beloved by all of his family members (Figure 1). To keep the memory of their lost brother alive, they named their sons after him.



Figure 1: Brinley Chaplin.

Source: Ann Matthew’s Collection.

On a visit to Wales in 2007, one of my cousins gave me some memorabilia she had inherited from her parents, who received it after the death of our Aunt Phyllis. These papers included a newspaper obituary, a photograph and a number of postcards concerning Brinley Chaplin. I had no idea who this person was but, as he was related to me, I was curious enough to see what I could find out about him.

I gleaned a few facts from the documents that I had been given and started looking for what else I could find. Unfortunately, Brinley's military records appear to have been among those destroyed during a WW II bombing raid. Nevertheless, I managed to piece together some of his story.

Brinley Chaplin is the first family member with that name that I have found. The name Brinley/Brynley is Welsh and means strong, courageous or noble. Our Brinley turned out to be my maternal grandmother's younger brother.

Here is his story.

Trooper Brinley Chaplin
Regimental Number: 21520
Regiment: 2nd Dragoon Guards
(Queen's Bays)

Brinley Chaplin was born in spring 1890 to Sarah Jane (Purnell) and George Chaplin, the seventh of their nine children.¹ The family lived in the mining village of Aberbeeg, South Wales, where Sarah and George had met and married in 1876, when they were in their mid-20s.² Neither was born in the area but had moved there during the mining boom of the mid-19th century.³ Sarah gave birth to their first child two years later. Brinley had five brothers and three sisters.⁴

Aberbeeg, where Brinley grew up, was a coalfield community on the Ebbw River and was a railway hub for the area. At that time it was a thriving community near the villages of Six Bells, Llanhilleth and Abertillery.

Brinley's father George was employed as an ostler at a local brewery.⁵ Today an ostler would be called a groom or a stableman; he cared for the brewery's horse teams.

Brinley's family of 11 (Figure 2) lived in a two-bedroom miner's cottage. This cottage was part of a row of houses backing onto the river not far from Webb's Brewery. How they all managed to live in that

small space is a mystery to me. The census records indicate that the Chaplin family lived in the same row of houses for close to a century and most of the male family members found work in the nearby coal industry. When we visited in the 1960s, my Aunt Phyllis was living in that same house, with other family members in the homes on either side of her.

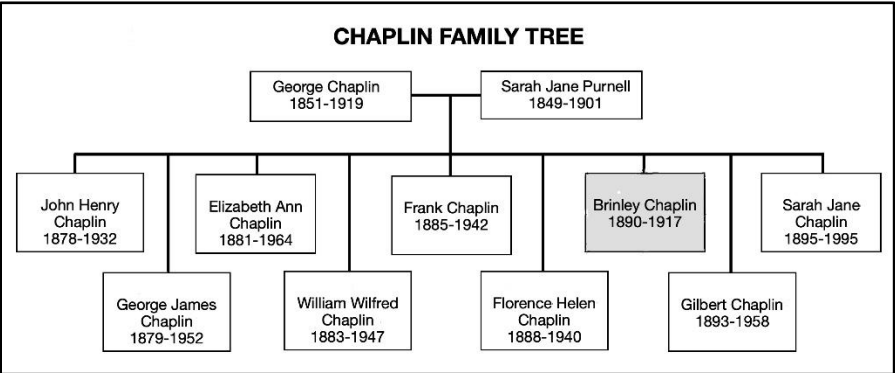


Figure 2: Chaplin Family Tree.

Source: Author.

For some years, Brinley’s oldest sister, Elizabeth, my grandmother, had been working in service at the home of an architect in Newport, Wales, 15 miles away. At one point in 1901, Elizabeth returned home to help care for their ailing mother, Sarah, who had consumption (tuberculosis). Sarah died on 10 December 1901,⁶ leaving four children under the age of 14 in the household. Her daughter Elizabeth never returned to Newport but remained with the family to help her father raise her younger siblings.⁷

In 1902, three months after her mother’s death, my grandmother, Elizabeth, gave birth to an illegitimate daughter, Phyllis Doreen Chaplin.⁸ Phyllis was then raised as Brinley’s baby sister.⁹ She adored Brinley and was devastated when he died. Phyllis married but never had any children of her own to name after him. Instead, she kept Brinley alive through the memorabilia she cherished until her death in 1983. These were the pieces of her life that my cousin, Ann Matthews, gifted to me.

The 1901 Census tells us that Brinley was still in school at age 11,¹⁰ while the 1911 Census indicated that, by age 22, he was working as a “hewer” at the Aberbeeg Colliery (Messrs. Budd & Co., Ltd.).¹¹ Brinley

must have finished school and started work in the mine shortly after the 1901 Census was taken.

Learning the trade of a miner meant you began at the bottom as a “sorter boy” and worked your way up to an expert miner, known as a “hewer.” In those days, a coal miner usually began his trade while still a boy; some started work in the mine as young as 11 years of age. They were employed as sorter boys and “putters” before becoming hewers. A sorter boy identified ores and separated them from the commercially worthless material that surrounded the coal. He also worked as a putter or “truck pusher” and transported material around the mine in wagons. Once these tasks were mastered, the worker could become an apprentice hewer. After two years of apprenticeship, the miner was considered a practitioner of his trade.¹² A hewer was a miner who worked at the coal face loosening rock and minerals.¹³ Brinley would have worked hard to have achieved the role of hewer by the age of 21.

By the time of the 1911 Census, Brinley was no longer living in his father’s home. His sister, Elizabeth, with her husband, their first three children and Brinley’s father George now filled the little house on Woodland Terrace.¹⁴ Brinley, however, was now living nearby with his sister Florence, her husband, Albert Williams, and their three-year-old daughter. Florence and Albert were both employed at the Constitutional Club as stewards.¹⁵

Sometime between 1911 and the start of the Great War (1914–1918), Brinley escaped the mines and took a job working as a barman at the Bell Inn in nearby Abertillery.¹⁶

Brinley was a popular young man in the area and, like many men from mining valleys in Wales, he played rugby football¹⁷ and sang with choirs both at church and chapel. On one occasion he performed at a fundraiser for the Zion Tabernacle along with his brother-in-law, Chandos Williams (Elizabeth’s husband and my grandfather).¹⁸

Brinley’s brother George had joined the South Wales Borderers Militia in 1898¹⁹ and was posted to the front in January 1915 with their Labour Corps.²⁰ He was gassed in the trenches but was not discharged until January 1919. His injuries continued to affect him for the rest of his life.²¹ Another brother, Jack (John Henry), signed up soon after the war began in August 1914 and enlisted with the Welsh Fusiliers. He served as a sniper until becoming ill in the summer of 1916. Thereafter he served in England until the war ended.²²

Unlike his older brothers, Brinley did not enlist immediately. There is conflicting information regarding his exact enlistment date. It could have been at any time between late 1915 and March 1916.²³ Brinley enlisted in Newport²⁴ with the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays) of the 1st Cavalry Brigade.²⁵ He trained as a trooper in Aldershot, Hampshire, and was deployed to France around the end of September 1916.²⁶ "Trooper" is the rank given to a soldier in a British cavalry regiment, equivalent to a private in other branches of the army (cover illustration).

It was no surprise to the family that Brinley chose the cavalry, as he had grown up around horses and had likely helped his father care for the brewery horses.²⁷

The 2nd Dragoon Guards, or the Queen's Bays, was originally established as a cavalry regiment of the British Army in 1685. The men rode only bay-coloured horses, which gave the regiment its name. As a cavalry regiment, it was known for being a mobile mounted and infantry unit with light, fast horses and was still a cavalry unit during the Great War.²⁸ It must have been a moving sight to see these soldiers with their reddish-brown horses and red dress uniforms.²⁹

At the outset of WW I the Bays Regiment was part of the original British Expeditionary Force in Europe.³⁰ It fought in both mounted and infantry roles in many engagements, including the Retreat from Mons (1914), Le Cateau (1914), the Marne (1914), Ypres (1914), the Somme (1916), Arras (1917), Cambrai (1917) and the Scarpe (1918). Heavily involved on the Western Front throughout the war, its officers, soldiers and horses suffered significant casualties.³¹

Brinley arrived in the field just after the Bays had finished a tour of duty patrolling on the Somme in late 1916. It remained in that area until withdrawing into billets near Daours, then a few days later to Blangy-sur-Ternoise. During a miserable time in October when the weather was very wet, it made two more moves and then spent the rest of the winter at Montcavrel, where it remained until joining the push on Arras and Vimy Ridge in April 1917.³²

Brinley's war began that spring with the second Battle for Arras and was short and brutal. It started and ended near the town of Fampoux (Figure 3).

The battle began for the Bays on Easter Monday, 9 April 1917.³³ It was part of a much larger attack throughout that area that included the

Battle of Vimy Ridge where Canadian forces succeeded in taking the ridge just a few days later.³⁴

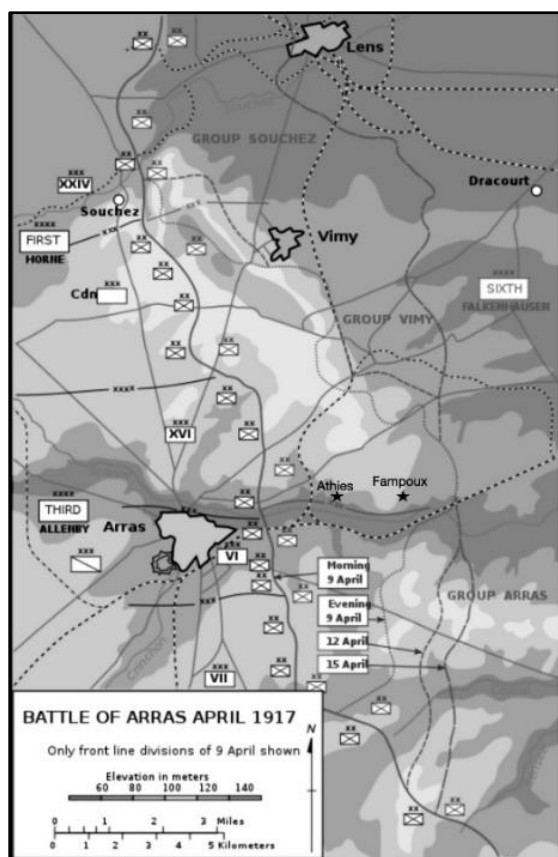


Figure 3: Battle of Arras — Easter 1917.

Source: Wikipedia Commons.

The Arras offensive on the Western Front took place between 9 April to 16 May 1917 when Allied troops attacked German defences near the French city of Arras. The battle was planned to start on the 8th of April, Easter Sunday, but was delayed at the last minute at the request of the French. It was postponed until the next day, Easter Monday.³⁵ The Bays spent Easter Sunday marching eastwards to Agnières where they spent the night in open bivouac in a field. The weather was awful—very heavy rain, followed by very cold weather, high winds and snow. On Tuesday, 10 April, the regiment continued to march

eastwards around Arras towards Athies and Fampoux. The roads were in very bad condition and completely congested with military traffic. The weather continued to be bitterly cold and the regiment halted for the night about a quarter of a mile west of Fampoux. The 2nd Dragoon Guards spent another bitter night huddled in a snowy field, near the town, with no cover or protection from enemy guns.³⁶

The next day they were ordered to seize Greenland Hill beyond the village of Fampoux and then extend their march northeastwards. The Bays were the leading regiment that day and were ordered to begin an attack on the enemy at midday. As they moved through the town, the

leading troop was subjected to shell fire and an officer and seven men were wounded. Then a nearby wall was struck by shell fire, trapping a number of men who needed to be dug out. Still under fire, the leading squadron commander ordered his men to take cover and sent a patrol of seven men to probe forward and find out if the infantry had really been successful in their attack. That party was gunned down and the survivors returned on foot under cover of a snowstorm. This abortive action cost the Bays the lives of four men and 14 horses. Four officers and 18 men were wounded.³⁷ Brinley was likely one of those wounded.

Brinley was admitted into hospital on 13 April 1917 with a gunshot wound to his right leg.³⁸ It is reasonable to assume that it took some time for him to be removed from the front for treatment in hospital. Once treated, Brinley was transported back to England, where he was hospitalized at Stoke-on-Trent.³⁹ His father was informed of his injury on 16 April.⁴⁰ Four days later, George Chaplin was contacted again with news that his son was seriously ill and George rushed to Brinley's side. As Stoke-on-Trent is some distance away from Aberbeeg, George arrived only shortly before Brinley died on 22 April 1917.⁴¹

The scale of injuries in WW I dwarfed those of previous wars. Almost 60 per cent of injuries were the result of modern weaponry and the resulting wounds were more devastating and difficult to treat than in previous conflicts. In addition, the very real possibility of blood loss and infection hindered a wounded soldier's chances of survival. The well-manured fields of France, the muddy trenches and the lack of sanitary conditions made infections even more likely. Penicillin and antibiotics that we take for granted today were not discovered until the 1940s.⁴²

The average time for bacteria to move from the wound to the bloodstream, resulting in systemic infection, is six hours. Therefore, the longer the wounded man remained on the battlefield, the poorer his chances of survival.⁴³ The faster a wounded soldier could be treated, the greater his chances of survival. Perhaps just such a circumstance was the cause of Brinley's demise.

By 1917, a relatively effective "chain of treatment" had been established to retrieve casualties from the front. Each regiment was assigned a medical officer and 16 stretcher bearers. Soldiers also helped evacuate the wounded.⁴⁴

The casualty would first be taken to a field dressing station, where first aid could be administered. Then he was evacuated to a casualty clearing station, where he would be seen and treated by a doctor. Casualty clearing stations were essentially field hospitals, usually housed in tents, where soldiers could be treated and where operating rooms were set up for surgeons to deal with more difficult injuries when required. Once treated, seriously wounded patients were sent on to hospitals further behind the lines or back to Britain. The less seriously wounded would be patched up and returned to their regiment.⁴⁵

Once a patient arrived at a casualty clearing station, their chances of survival immediately improved. Casualty clearing stations were also the closest locations to the front that female nurses and doctors were allowed to go. It seems probable that Brinley's journey from the battlefield was delayed.

Despite these improvements in the military medical system, effective treatment could not be guaranteed. Somewhere in this chain of treatment, Brinley's wound became badly infected. It appears that his initial situation was not considered serious enough to summon his father to his bedside. However, in the ensuing days, this infection led to his death. On 24 April, George Chaplin brought Brinley's body home on the evening train. A large crowd of sympathizers gathered at the station to greet the evening train. Brinley was buried in Christchurch Cemetery, Aberbeeg, on 28 April 1917.⁴⁶ His gravestone (Figure 4) is quite near the church and overlooks the valley below. It reads:

*In Loving Memory of Brinley Chaplin, 2nd
Dragoon Guards*

*Who died at Aberbeeg from Wounds
received at Arras, (France) April 22,
1917,*

Aged 26 years.

*I have fought for King and Country,
Like a Valiant Man and true,
I have only done my duty,
As a man is bound to do.*⁴⁷



**Figure 4: Brinley Chaplin's
Tombstone — Christchurch
Cemetery, Aberbeeg.**

Source: Collection of Lynne
Willoughby.

Postscript:

Six of Brinley's siblings had sons and four of them named one of their boys after Brinley.

For a number of years after Brinley's death, his family continued to remember his absence by placing annual "In Memoriam" posts in the local newspaper.

In 1989, 71 years after the end of WW I, a war memorial was erected on the grounds of the Llanhilleth Miners' institute to commemorate the local men lost during both World Wars. Brinley Chaplin is one of those commemorated by the approximately 200 people who attend this service every year.⁴⁸

Lynne Willoughby 2025

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He Wore Two Blue Coats: William Henry Northwood

BY JOHN D. REID



John's passion for family history began in 1998 after retiring as an environmental scientist and policy director with Canada's Meteorological Service. A former BIFHSGO president and board member, he wrote a quarterly Anglo-Celtic Roots column until 2023, drawing on his ongoing Anglo-Celtic Connections blog. He led BIFHSGO's Ottawa Sharpshooter project, published a guide on researching British home children, and has chaired the City of Ottawa's Arts, Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee. John's family roots span the

British Isles, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada.

It's a dismal Liverpool day in 1866; dank and gloomy. You're at home with your colicky infant daughter, feeling tired and queasy. Your husband, William, a respected jewellery buyer for a department store, is late back from work. The hours tick by. What could have kept him? Worry turns to fright.



Figure 1: AI-generated illustration of a Christ's Hospital schoolboy ca. 1850, wearing the school's distinctive blue coat - based on a description.
Source: Author.

That's how I imagined the feelings Mary Ann had one day in late 1866.

Mary Ann's husband, William Henry Northwood, was born on 9 June 1840 and baptized at St. Philip's Church in Birmingham, England, a few years later.¹ His younger sister, Sarah, named after their aunt, was baptized on the same day. The siblings' parents were John, a butcher, and Jane Wilson.

The 1851 Census records William, aged 11, at Christ's Hospital, a charity school in London known as the Blue Coat School (Figure 1).² William's father filed the paperwork to admit him at age eight. He likely got his place there through his aunt, his father's sister, who had married wealthy Jeremiah Macklin Allcroft, in a second marriage for them both.³ Her stepson, John Derby Allcroft, an MP and philanthropist, was the school's treasurer.⁴ Allcroft

sponsored William and arranged a desirable apprenticeship as a shop clerk when he left the school in 1855.⁵

The 1861 Census recorded William living above the large Liverpool department store, Compton House, with 180 other staff.⁶ The building was new with “sitting-rooms of capacious dimensions and elegance provided for the buyers and superintendents—young men, young ladies, and apprentices. Each floor containing baths, plentifully supplied with hot and cold water, all of which have for their object the improvement and elevation of the habits and character of the young people employed.”⁷ His apprenticeship ended the next year, and he continued with the company, gaining seniority.



Figure 2: Great fire at Liverpool, Saturday, 9 Dec. 1865, image from *The Illustrated London News* (London, U.K.), vol. 47, issue 1346.

Source: The Wellcome Library online, accessed 5 October 2025.

In August 1865, William married Mary Ann Wilson, the daughter of a wealthy Herefordshire farmer.⁸ Then, in December that year, Compton House caught fire and William made the news for his bravery (Figure 2). The *Liverpool Daily Post* reported that he, a buyer in the jewellery section, had smashed a window with his bare hands to rescue crucial papers from the business owner’s office (Figure 3).

The next month, William made the papers again, this time identifying stolen pieces of silverware from the fire. He was well established in the community and was initiated into the United Grand Lodge of England as a Freemason in February 1866.⁹

The birth registration in July 1866 of their daughter, Eva Marian Allcroft, my great-grandmother, placed them in Everton, now a suburb of Liverpool.¹⁰ Their second child, Herbert William Wilson, was born in June 1867. His mother registered the birth from her parents’ home, with William’s occupation given as a jeweller.¹¹

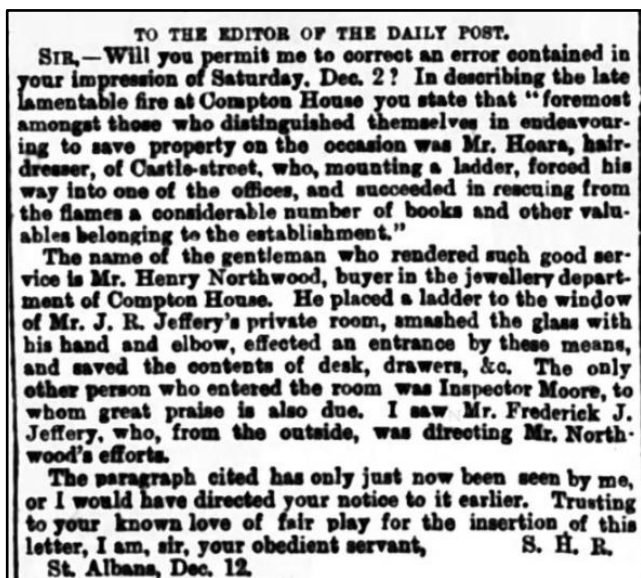


Figure 3: Great fire at Liverpool, 9 Dec. 1865, letter to the Editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, 13 Dec. 1865, p. 5.

Source: Newspapers.com., accessed 5 October 2025.

with his mother’s parents.¹⁴

But what about William? There’s no death registration! Nor could I find any missing person reports. Sadly, back then authorities in places like Liverpool often didn’t care much about missing people. A newspaper criticized Liverpool’s leaders as neglectful!¹⁵

In 1874, seven years after Herbert was born, Mary Ann married chemist [pharmacist], Thomas Price.¹⁶ She claimed that William was dead, but there was no proof. Her second marriage would have been void if he had been found alive. The 1881 Census later records her and Thomas living in Arundel, Sussex with three children and two servants.¹⁷

Meanwhile, William’s rich aunt Sarah passed away in 1880. She never had children; her will is a genealogist’s dream!¹⁸ She left money to many relatives, including William, but with a twist if William didn’t reappear in England to claim his share before his children, Eva and Herbert, turned 21. In 1882, newspapers carried a solicitor’s notice; William stood to inherit on the death of his late aunt (Figure 4).¹⁹ He probably never saw it, so Eva and Herbert shared his inheritance of about £200,000 in today’s funds.

The mystery of William’s absence referred to earlier is revealed in the 1871 Census. William has vanished! By this time Mary Ann is a governess far away in London.¹² Their daughter, Eva, lives in Birmingham with her paternal grandparents, who have listed her as their child.¹³ Herbert is

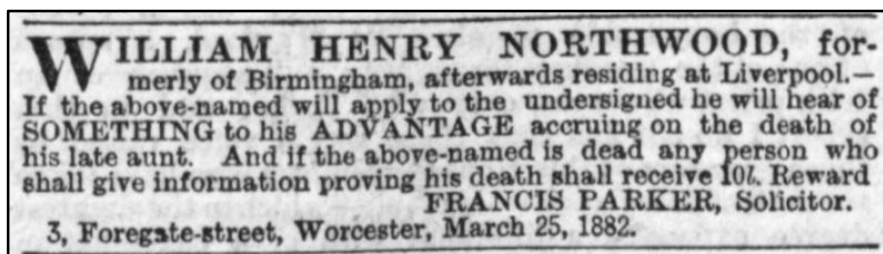


Figure 4: 1882 Solicitor's inheritance notice from *The London Evening Standard*, 31 March 1882, p 1.

Source: British Newspaper Archive, accessed 4 October 2025.

Eva married in 1885 giving her father as a merchant.²⁰ Her brother Herbert's marriage certificate in 1891 listed William as dead.²¹ Neither was true; the mystery lingered for over a century. I searched every new genealogy database in what seemed like a forlorn mission, then moved on to research other branches of my family tree.

Finally, a breakthrough!—or was it? I'd done so many fruitless searches by then—but could this be him? A William Henry Northwood had donned a blue U.S. army uniform in New York in February 1867.²² He's the right age, born in Birmingham, England—it all matches! It even says he was a clerk, which could have been a shop clerk, just like William (Figure 5).

Nichols	James	18				Bristol	Ed	28
Nowell	Brown H.	5				New York	N.Y.	21
Newbold	Thos H.	17	Buffalo	N.Y.	Lieut Dyer	Tallington	Pa	24
Northwood	Wm H.	13	New York	N.Y.	Ensign	Birmingham	England	38
Nelson	Frederick	4	St. Paul	Minn	Capt. Furman		London	25
Niehans	Geo	3	Cincinnati	O.	Harrier	Indianapolis	Ind	27
Normile	John	21	Angel	Isld	Lieut. Frith	Manchester	England	36
Olson	Nichl & Co.	25	Thousand	Ill	Ensign	Carbondale	Pa	44
Orian	Math & J. March	4	New York	N.Y.	Ensign	Millwater	New York	21
Ogland	Geo W.	3	Blackland	O.	Capt. Carpenter	Hayes	Ind	21

Figure 5: Entry for William H. Northwood, enlisted 13 February 1867 in New York; in U.S. Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914.

Source: Digital images at Ancestry.com, accessed 29 Feb. 2024.

Is this the same person? William Henry was a popular given name at the time.²³ But I couldn't find anyone else who matched the name and birth details. In darker moments I imagined him murdered and the culprit stealing his identity. If it is him, it narrows down his departure

to sometime between September 1866, likely when his son was conceived, and early 1867.

William's first few years as an army private went unrecorded. He was likely posted to enforce the reconstruction of the Confederate states following the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865). In 1870, he was promoted.²⁴ By 1873, he was a commissary sergeant, which means he'd already been a lower-ranking NCO for three years (Figure 6). Responsibility for the supply and distribution of food and other provisions makes sense—he used to be a store's buyer in Liverpool.



Figure 6: AI-generated illustration of a U.S. Army sergeant, ca 1885, wearing his blue coat—based on a text description of William Henry Northwood.
Source: Author.

William was stationed at Fort Griffin, Texas—the heart of the action of the Red River War (1874–1875).²⁵ This was the Wild West at its wildest! Settlers ravaged the buffalo herds, the lifeline of the Indigenous tribes.²⁶ Outraged, the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne and Arapaho fought back, despite being hopelessly outnumbered. The army crushed the resistance.

William was there from 1873 to 1878. Official records are dry—just dates and duties. They don't tell you about the chaos outside the fort. Horse thieves were lynched, while legends like Bat Masterson and Doc Holliday walked the streets.

William was posted for over a decade at Fort Leavenworth Disciplinary Barracks in Kansas. The 1880 Census lists him there as Commissary Sergeant (Figure 7).²⁷ After a brief time at Fort Davis, Texas, he moved on to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri, where he died in service in 1896.²⁸ He's buried there (Figure 8).²⁹

NAME	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	STATUS	REMARKS
Jameson, Christian	11/11/11	3:30		✓	Soldier
Calarte, Hafford	11/11/11	5:2		✓	Soldier
North, Wm	11/11/11	4:0		✓	Soldier

Interment in the Jefferson Bks. Mo. National Cemetery
To—The Quartermaster General, Washington, D. C.

NAME	RANK	COMPANY	REGIMENT OR VESSEL			DIVISION, IF WORLD WAR SOLDIER
			Number	State	Arm	
Northwood, Wm. H.	Com.Sgt.	U. S. Army				

DATE OF DEATH			DATE OF INTERMENT			GRAVE MARK		REMARKS Date of discharge and number of Pension Certificate, Disinterments, etc.
Month	Day	Year	Month	Day	Year	Section	Grave No.	
Jan.	10	1896				59	11695	Orig.bur. Jefferson Bks. Mo.

Shipping point for headstones: _____

9-2850

(See Instructions on Reverse Side)

Superintendent.

68560750019

Figure 8: Burial records for Wm. H. Northwood in U.S., National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928–1962, NARA.

Source: Ancestry, accessed 4 October 2025.

So I figured out what had happened to William, but the mystery remains—*why* did he leave England?

Did he simply abandon his family? That seems strange. He was brave during the fire, trusted at work, welcomed as a Freemason whose lodge he attended until the last quarter of 1866, and had served in the army for years. Maybe the marriage was unhappy and they both thought they'd be better off apart. Even after the *Matrimonial Causes Act* of 1857, divorce was still complicated and frowned on. Men could obtain a divorce if their wife had committed adultery, whereas she had to prove her husband had committed cruelty, desertion, incest or bigamy as well. Maybe William and Mary Ann just decided to go their separate ways, like many others. My speculation about desertion seems less likely.

Mary Ann outlived both of her husbands. She died in 1904 while running a pharmacy in London.³⁰ Was she more attracted to commerce than domesticity? Her will mentions only her youngest son, Edward, who was in the business.

I thought the story was over, but genealogy is never done! New records appear all the time. We search and we re-search as new resources become available. So I tried the “Full Text Search” tool at *FamilySearch*.

First available at RootsTech 2024 as experimental, it’s now part of the regular search capability. Using artificial intelligence handwriting recognition technology, it found U.S. land records showing that William bought land in Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1887.³¹ The local newspaper wrote about soldiers at the fort catching “real estate fever.”³²

Those Leavenworth newspapers held another shock, not even hinted at in the military records. William had married Amanda Willis—I’d completely missed their 1873 Kentucky civil marriage (Figure 9).³³ It was likely added to *Ancestry* after I’d completed, or thought I’d completed, my research. However, there’s no sign of Amanda in the U.S. 1880 Census. Newspaper notices after William’s death mention Amanda as being mentally ill.³⁴ She spent years in an asylum in Kansas and died there in 1927.³⁵ Those same newspaper notices mention two daughters from the marriage—Mary and Lillian.

How many distant half-cousins could there now be to discover?

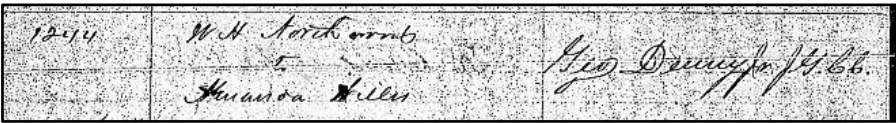


Figure 9: Entry for W. H. Northwood and Amanda Willis in 1873 marriage records, from Kentucky, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1783–1965.

Source: Digital images, Ancestry.com, accessed 3 Mar. 2024.

John Reid

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We Shall Remember Them[©]

BY NIGEL LLOYD

Nigel Lloyd has been a BIFHSGO member for ten years and has been writing soldier biographies for the No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station project for seven years. He gave a Great Moments talk about his great-great-grandfather Edward Lloyd, for which he won the best Great Moment talk award for 2018–19. He and Sheila Dohoo Faure did a presentation at the April 2025 BIFHSGO meeting and a similar presentation at the Strathcona County Library, near Edmonton, in November 2025. In this article he tells the story of a Scottish soldier from a mining family, who left behind a wife and two children.

Acting Lance Corporal John Samuel Thomson[©]

Regimental number: M2/227858

Army Service Corps

born: 26 June 1885–died: 31 October 1918

John Samuel Thomson was born on 26 June 1885 in Dumfries, Scotland, the second child of John Thomson and Helen, née Hill.¹ Their first child was a daughter, also named Helen, born in 1877.²

When she wed John, Helen was a widow; she had married Michael Watt in 1866³ and had borne him two daughters—Agnes (b. 1867)⁴ and Jane (b. 1868),⁵ though Jane died in the year of her birth.⁶

Michael Watt was a railway guard at the time of Agnes' birth in 1867, and he met a tragic death on the job in 1870. He was serving as a goods train guard, signaling to the driver to hook up to some wagons; he slipped and fell on the tracks and was run over by several of the wagons. He died an hour later, after suffering greatly.⁷

After Michael's death, Helen worked as a dressmaker before marrying John Thomson two years later.^{8, 9} At the time of his wedding, John worked for the railway, but he subsequently had a number of occupations: from steamship fireman in 1881¹⁰ to farm servant in 1885,¹¹ crane man in a shipbuilding yard in 1891,¹² and farmer in 1901.¹³ He died in 1909, aged 61.¹⁴ Helen was still alive in 1921, living with her daughter Agnes in Norfolk.¹⁵

John Samuel, while born in Dumfries, was living in Plantation (a district of Glasgow) with his parents, sister and half-sister in 1891.¹⁶ Ten years

later the family was living on Fauld's Farm in Cumbernauld, northeast of Glasgow, where John Sr. was the farmer and John Samuel was a blacksmith's apprentice.¹⁷ His sister Helen was also living there with her two young daughters (see below), as was John Sr.'s widowed father James.

In 1911, John Samuel, now a blacksmith journeyman, married Margaret Brown, "spinster," a dressmaker from Polmont, Stirlingshire.¹⁸ She was the daughter of Andrew Brown, a coal miner who 13 years later would lose his life in one of the worst Scottish mining disasters in history, the Redding Pit disaster, near Polmont.¹⁹

On 25 September 1923, 73 miners (including Andrew Brown) were nearing the end of a long overnight shift in No. 23 Pit when there was a sudden in-rush of water. Six men escaped up the main shaft, 21 were rescued that day, and three bodies were brought up, but 43 miners remained entombed underground as the rising flood prevented any further rescue. It was two months later before their bodies were recovered.²⁰

The bodies of 11 miners, including Andrew Brown, were found together at the lowest part of the mine in what was likely an air lock, as messages to their family members were found in one man's tin box, indicating they survived for a number of days before the oxygen ran out. Andrew, at 65, was the oldest of those entombed.

John Samuel and Margaret had two children: John in 1912²¹ and Alison Dalrymple in 1915.²² In September 1916, John Samuel, described as a taxi driver, enlisted in Hamilton, Lanarkshire, and was assigned to the Mechanical Transport Depot of the Army Service Corps, in London. He probably answered an advertisement such as shown in Figure 1. He was called up for service on 6 October 1916 and transferred to France a month later with the 1st Base Mechanical Transport Depot.

Over the next year he was assigned for short periods to various mechanical transport companies, but most frequently to 402 Mechanical Transport Company. This company was formed in July 1916 and served as the ammunition column for the 25th Brigade Royal Garrison Artillery,²³ responsible for transporting the heavy artillery and shells where they were needed.

On 23 March 1918, Private Thomson was promoted to the rank of Acting Lance Corporal.

In October 1918, 402 Company was operating in the area east of Arras.²⁴ On 30 October an Albion truck with one of the siege battery ammunition columns was badly damaged by shellfire, and there were six casualties, including Acting Lance Corporal Thomson.

He was taken that day to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where he died of “wounds received in action” the following day. He was buried on 1 November in the Auberchicourt British Military Cemetery (Grave 2, Plot 1, Row A).²⁵ The inscription on his grave reads:

“LOVED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM”

Auberchicourt, a village about 12 km to the east of Douai, was occupied by Commonwealth troops in October 1918. The Auberchicourt British Cemetery, which is just west of the village, was set up at the end of October and was used until February 1919, while the 6th, 23rd and 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations were located nearby.

His awards file was destroyed,²⁶ but Acting Lance Corporal Thomson would have been eligible for the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service.

John Samuel’s sister Helen (also spelt Hellen or Ellen) was listed as a message girl in the 1891 Census at the age of 13.²⁷ In 1897 she married George Findlay, a railway signalman, when both were 19.²⁸ They had three children, Ellen (b. 1898),²⁹ Agnes (b. 1901),³⁰ and George (b. 1905),³¹ but both Agnes³² and George³³ died in infancy.

In 1891 John Samuel’s half-sister Agnes, working as a dressmaker, was living with John Samuel, his sister Helen, their mother and John Thomson Sr.³⁴ That same year she married William Wilson, a grocer.³⁵ By 1901 they had moved to Norfolk, England, where William was now

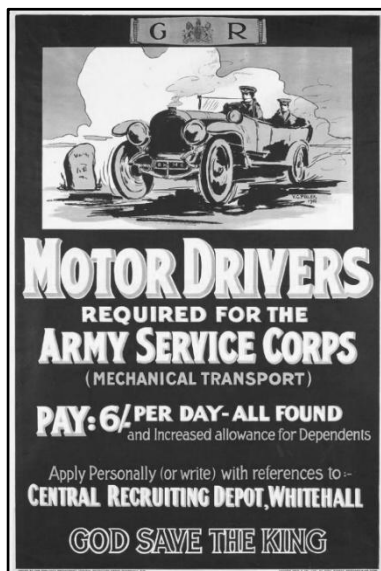


Figure 1:1915 Recruiting Poster

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Army_Service_Corps#/media/File:Army_Service_Corps_recruiting_poster_1915.jpg.

Attributed: V.C. Pollex.

a farmer.³⁶ They had five children³⁷ and were still living in Norfolk in 1939, by which time William had retired.³⁸ Agnes died in 1960 at age 93.³⁹

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The No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station biography team is very sad to announce that one of our biographers, **Marcia Clement**, died in October 2025. She had been writing biographies since 2018 and had three published in ACR—Summer and Fall 2025 and Fall 2024. Marcia was a retired federal public servant whose interest in genealogy began over 25 years ago, researching her own family roots. When she wrote to tell us that she was in hospital, the subject of her message was simply “Sorry I’m having to drop out of the project.” She will be missed.

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Tech Talk

Standalone Genealogy Applications

BY PAUL CRIPWELL



This is one of a series of articles designed to address the Education goal of BIFHSGO, namely, to take advantage of technology in our family history research. Future articles will be written to cover this wide-ranging topic. Suggestions are welcome and volunteers to write articles on a topic of their choice would be greatly appreciated.

In this article I will use my experience with *Family Tree Maker*¹ (FTM) to examine applications that allow you to conduct and record most of your research and tree information locally on your computer, known as “standalone” applications, rather than in “the cloud” or online applications. Each has both advantages and disadvantages and, as usual, it is your decision as to which course of action you take—there are no right answers!

Overall, the functionalities of web-based and standalone applications are very similar, especially when it comes to the basic functions of tree-building, searches and reference documentation. The main differences are that web-based applications store all your data in the cloud, while standalone applications will maintain all the data locally on your computer.

While I have a few years of experience with FTM, there are many other applications out there that you might want to consider. I therefore rely on my decades of experience with many different software applications to draw inferences about the other applications mentioned in this article.

Regardless of the application in use, you will still need a subscription to one or more of the Big Four genealogy websites (*Ancestry*,² *MyHeritage*,³ *Findmypast*,⁴ *FamilySearch*⁵) to conduct research. The cost of one or more of these subscriptions is over and above the cost of the software.

Here are some of the other applications that I have come across, though this list is by no means complete:

- *Family Tree Builder*⁶ by *MyHeritage*
- *Gramps*⁷
- *RootsMagic*⁸

You can see that there is quite a selection—a sign of good competition in the market. Doing an internet search for “best genealogy software” will reveal a much longer list. Among other things this is good for the future development of the applications in general and the continued development of enhancements that would support and improve your research and reporting. Unfortunately, the large number of options may make it more difficult to choose among them.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a standalone application versus an online application?

I will address this under the following topics:

- User Interface
- Cost
- Access to Services
- Service Connections
- Storage
- Features
- DNA

User Interface

The user interface is probably the most important factor in determining which standalone software you should pursue and how it compares to an online application. This interface represents how you work with the software and includes tasks such as filling in forms, adding citations and inserting media, amongst others.

You may find that standalone applications are a little more responsive, as there is no delay associated with any communication across the internet.

The software developers, both standalone and online, used their own knowledge, expertise and experience to build this interface. They determined both the interface and the internal workings of the application. While you have no dealings with the internal workings, you do interact with the various screen displays, forms, etc. If you interact well with the application, that is a good thing. If you find you are “fighting” with this interface, then it might be time to get a different application. Fighting with an application is a losing proposition, every time.

I use the term “fighting” to signify any of the following problem cases.

- The fields are not laid out logically for you.
- Tasks do not follow a logical procedure.
- Things are not stored where you expect them and are therefore hard to find.
- Creating charts and reports is not intuitive..

All the research you have accomplished must be easily stored and retrieved when needed. This should be as easy as possible. Pick the software that makes it so.

Cost

There are variety of cost models for standalone genealogy applications.

The cost of *Family Tree Maker* (FTM) by Mackiev.com is C\$115 for Windows and Mac versions. You can purchase many additional products and features that will add to this cost. This price is for a downloaded file that installs on your computer. Options such as a DVD version and manuals cost extra.

The *Family Tree Builder* application by *MyHeritage* is free to download from their site. However, you must subscribe to their services. The lowest cost subscriptions are limited in their capacity, search capabilities and other features. An ongoing annual subscription could become a significant expense. Note that a search for *Family Tree Builder* will also return a different genealogy website that is akin to *Ancestry* or *MyHeritage*. So there are many options to choose from! To find the application being referred to, search for “*MyHeritage Family Tree Builder*.”

Gramps is also a free application. A community of genealogists is working on its development. There are also third-party developers providing additional features as add-ons within the package. It is possible that some of these add-ons will have a price. You might also feel obliged to contribute to the development community as you are using their “free” software.

RootsMagic 7 costs US\$30, although there is a free version available for testing—*RootsMagic Essentials*. Reviews of this software are positive.

Trying out free software is always a good idea. Remember that any files you create will have to be transported to any other software you try. If possible, do any testing on small trees, as it is possible that your data may not be easily transferred, in which case you will have to re-enter everything. Using the GEDCOM⁹ standard should make this straightforward.

Regardless of which application you decide on, there will be a subscription cost to obtain access to records at any of the major genealogy websites.

Access to Services

In this section I use the word “services” to refer to the many sources of family history information available on the internet. While the “Big Four” websites—*Ancestry*, *MyHeritage*, *FindMyPast* and *FamilySearch*—are the most well-known, other sources of indexed information, such as grave registration sites, newspaper archives and military archives are included in this category.

As mentioned in the section above, the application you pick should interface with the sources of genealogy records. Standalone applications will probably include a built-in interface to one or more of these services.

This access will include transferring your search criteria; for example, when searching for records for a particular person, the application will populate the appropriate search fields with the data from your tree. You then review the parameters being sent, modify the parameters like country, time period or record types, and hit search.

The records of interest are then returned and displayed for your consideration, in any combination of the results from the service and the application itself. For example, the FTM search process will populate the fields in a search request to *Ancestry*. A series of records

matching the search criteria are then shown, using the *Ancestry* interface. Once a record is chosen for closer inspection, the details of the record are also shown in the *Ancestry* interface. The FTM interface includes a “merge” button. When selected, this will cause FTM to take the *Ancestry* information and display it in a comparative format, so you can see what information will be added/changed in the person’s profile. This is done for each person associated with the record. FTM includes a final acceptance step.

The application will then take all the relevant information from the source record, add it to the target person’s profile(s) in your tree and create the citation so the record can be located again. If there is an image associated with the record, it is also downloaded and linked to the profile(s).

All this should happen seamlessly. The result is a new record attached to the correct profile, updated information as necessary, and an appropriate reference and citation inserted.

If the application does not support a particular service, then you must do all the above tasks manually to insert the information into your tree, including downloading and associating any images.

This leads to the topic in the next section.

Service Connections

The previous section discussed how you access the various genealogical databases (this includes the Big Four and other data sources) and process the records found. In this section, I will look at which services and their accompanying databases you can access via the application.

You can imagine how complex it is for the application to interrogate a database. The databases supported by each service are unique and consequently the interface to each must be built to accommodate the contents and peculiarities of each one. It is not practical to build an interface to every service, so only certain ones are selected by the software developer.

When you are choosing an application, check the services that can be accessed and decide which ones are important to your research.

Storage

One consideration that is important to many researchers is where to store their data—online (“in the cloud”) or locally (on the computer hard drive).

Files stored on your computer are completely under your control. You must provide for your own backups, either locally or in the cloud. There is a marginal cost in the size of files to be stored, but this is usually not a consideration with current storage media. (A 5 terabyte external drive can be purchased for under \$40.)

A more significant issue might be the frequency and availability of backups. I will not provide any details on backup services that can be purchased or via a subscriber model. Nor will I suggest methods of doing your own backup and storage. These are significant topics on their own.

When it comes to storing the information contained within your tree, the software itself has its own database format, typically GEDCOM or something compatible. This is how it maintains the individual source records (with separate images) and keeps them associated to people or events in your tree. All this will probably be contained in a single file stored in a suitable folder on your computer. Its size will be significant and its internal structure will be unique to the software.

Here is how FTM stores its data along with sample file sizes from my main two research trees—*Cripwell May* (CM) and *Descendants of Thomas Creple* (DTC). The former contains the two branches for my parents, and the latter includes all the (known) descendants of Thomas Creple, the acknowledged originator of the Cripwell surname. Table 1 provides an indication of storage requirements for these two trees.

Table 1: Sample File Sizes from <i>Family Tree Maker</i>		
File Description	CM Tree	DTC Tree
Number of people in tree	2,134	2,639
Base structure and people database	89Mb	177Mb
Media files – in separate folder	3.6Gb	5.6Gb
Backup file – including media and all other options	3.9Gb	6.1Gb

These files are not small!

Storage space is relatively cheap these days; therefore maintaining these and much larger tree files is not an issue. However, handling any backup files might be, given the time it takes to move such large files to alternate media or the cloud.

Another aspect of file storage is where the files are stored. For example, in FTM the data for your tree is stored in two key places:

- First the main tree database, in GEDCOM compatible format, is stored in the home directory.
- All the media for any tree is stored in a sub-directory using the name of the tree with the word “Media” appended.

When you know the location of these files, you can manipulate and back them up using any file handling technique.

Having a backup to your research is essential. You must protect yourself against any number of incidents, including accidental deletion, fire/catastrophe at home, and malware. A common question is: where should that backup be?

A backup in the “cloud” is generally a good idea, but future access remains an open question, especially when transferring your tree and data to someone else.

A local backup on a thumb-drive, for example, is also a good idea. But where to keep that drive? Offsite is ideal, but not always practical.

Ultimately, you must choose the type and frequency of backup that makes you comfortable.

Features

Each standalone application will have its own unique features as well as a host of standard features. The good news is that when one application builds a new feature, all the other developers are watching. If this new feature appears to be worthwhile, all the applications will include something similar in later editions. What this means for you, the user, is that you shouldn’t think about changing applications in order to obtain new features; your chosen application will probably include it in the next update or upgrade.

FTM includes the feature of synchronization with *Ancestry*, linking to a tree that is duplicated on their website. When activated, the synchronization process scans for any changes made to either tree, then updates both accordingly. In the event of a discrepancy that can’t be resolved automatically, manual intervention is required. This gives you the benefit of using either application to make changes to your tree, then synchronizing them.

Other features you might want to look for during your investigation are:

- Geographical presentation of places
- Photo and image enhancement, colourization etc.
- Reports and charts

FTM's latest release, 2024, includes photo enhancement software. This is a feature I am interested in, though have not yet had the opportunity to try.

DNA

A final consideration is the ability of the chosen application to work with DNA. Since I have not done DNA analysis myself, I can only cover this topic through what I have been able to research and understand from the descriptions available for each application.

- *Family Tree Maker* does not include any functionality for DNA analysis. The Help feature of FTM states that the DNA data from an *Ancestry* test result can be included as a fact. This is done by linking a fact in FTM to the *Ancestry* record.
- *Gramps* documentation states that it provides tools to work with matches from autosomal DNA, though this data must have been uploaded to matching databases, *MyHeritage*, *GedMatch* or *FamilyTree* DNA.
- *RootsMagic* documentation shows how to enter DNA matches into a person's profile. This suggests that these matches must be obtained from a separate source. It appears this application can work with any matches, but it can't search and find them.

A large part of DNA analysis is about finding relatives. This can only be done with access to the main DNA databases maintained at major sites. At present I have not found any standalone application that is capable of using and scanning these databases.

Conclusion

As with anything else, you get what you pay for! And as Crane's Law states: There is no such thing as a free lunch!

You may not want, or cannot afford, to spend a lot of time investigating the best application. Chances are that any application you choose from a known and reliable source, will be functional and therefore allow you to do your investigating, research and documentation. The more you

use the application, the more familiar you will become with its way of operating.

There are no bad choices, but once you choose an application, stick with it for some time to become familiar with its operation and features; some of these may not be obvious.

Finally, user groups exist for every application. Become a member and use the community for support.

Reference Notes

- ¹ FTM is a product of McKiev Software and the current version is FTM 2024, released this year. It was originally part of the *Ancestry* suite of applications but was sold off.
- ² www.ancestry.com, bought by The Blackstone Group in 2020, headquarters in Lehi, Utah, USA.
- ³ www.myheritage.com, headquarters in Or Yehuda, Israel.
- ⁴ www.findmypast.com, owned by DC Thomson, UK, headquarters in London, England.
- ⁵ www.familysearch.com, sponsored and operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.
- ⁶ A product of MyHeritage Ltd., Or Yehuda, Israel.
- ⁷ An open-source free product of The Gramps Team.
- ⁸ A product of RootsMagic Inc., Salem, Utah.
- ⁹ GEDCOM is the *de facto* standard file format for the storage and transfer of genealogy data, <https://www.gedcom.org/>. The latest version is GEDCOM 5.5.5, October 2019.

BIFHSGO Program Highlights for 2026

BY DIANNE BRYDON, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The program is set for the remainder of the 2025–2026 calendar—and the Program Committee (Paul Cripwell, Susan Hepinstall, Nancy Higgins, Marianne Rasmus, John Reid and Veronica Scrimger) is already planning for next season!

For many years, BIFHSGO's monthly meetings featured just one family history presentation of about an hour in length. Several years ago, a shorter talk was added before it, called "Before BIFHSGO." These sessions were often focussed on skills development—talks about sources or techniques. We eventually dropped the name because people didn't know what it meant, but continued with the same two-presentation format.

The Program Committee is building the program to feature family history stories and tips and techniques. To allow more flexibility, talks are now scheduled according to their length. For instance, in October we heard Barbara Tose's shorter family history talk at 9 a.m., followed by Ken McKinlay's overview of the LAC website at 10 a.m.

In future we will focus on more member interaction: watch for polls and surveys about your research tips and program preferences; plans are in the works for a quiz night (or afternoon) in the spring; and your feedback will help us select a theme for a workshop in 2027.

In March 2026, we will partner with the Irish Genealogy Research Society, which will be celebrating its 90th anniversary next year, to deliver a lecture in Ottawa featuring noted historian David Wilson from the University of Toronto.

As always, we will feature your family history stories at our monthly meetings, which inspire us to pursue our own research. Be they long or short, if you have a story to share, please contact Program Director Dianne Brydon at programs@bifhsgo.ca.

And to see what the Society has to offer, check the BIFHSGO website any time at <https://www.bifhsgo.ca/events>.

Hall of Fame Award Nomination Period Opens

The Hall of Fame, BIFHSGO's longest running award, honours members for long term meritorious contributions to the Society, family history research and genealogy.

Nominees (individuals or teams) will be inducted annually if they meet the criteria listed below. Multiple awards may be given in any particular year. Nominee(s) are inducted at BIFHSGO's Annual General Meeting in June. Current members of the Board are not eligible for nomination.

Selection criteria

- The advancement of BIFHSGO objectives (vision, mission and values).
- The advancement of BIFHSGO projects or activities, e.g., publishing, educational programs.
- Outstanding long-term service to the Society.
- The advancement of genealogy and family history in general.
- The nominee(s) will have recently contributed to the goals of BIFHSGO.

Each February, members are invited to nominate a candidate for consideration by the Board. The nomination period ends 30 April. For more information, please contact secretary@bifhsgo.ca.

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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 Mission is to encourage family history research, and its dissemination, by people interested in ancestry in the British Isles. We do this by:

- connecting BIFHSGO members with each other and other like-minded persons,
- educating both beginning and more experienced family historians by promoting and demonstrating trusted research methods and best practices,
- sharing members' knowledge readily with other researchers, and
- inspiring others through educational presentations and members' published stories.

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 2025–2026 (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**

*10 January 2026	Who Pays the Piper? Wills and testaments of Scottish Musicians 1513-1800 Robert Urquhart Story Talk: It Started with a Button Susan Iskra-Reany
*14 February 2026	Tips and Techniques Talk: Exploring Pictures with AI, the Good and the Bad Paul Cripwell Story Talk: Rain-Soaked Roots: Weather Shaped the Lives of Our British Isles Ancestors John Reid
†14 March 2026	Tips and Techniques Talk: Tips for Using <i>FamilySearch's</i> Full Text Search Ken McKinlay – Discussion with members Story Talk: Thistles and Cedar, Hearts Entwined in War The story of her Scottish mother and Algonquin father, both soldiers. Wendy Jacko

Typical Meeting Schedule

09:00 – Tips and Techniques Talk

10:00 – Story Talk

***Zoom only meeting**

†Hybrid meeting

Check our website at www.bifhsgo.ca for up-to-date information on our monthly meetings, registration for online attendance, details of special interest group meetings and online resources.

Articles for *Anglo-Celtic Roots*

Articles and illustrations for publication are welcome. For advice on preparing manuscripts, please email acreditor@bifhsgo.ca. The deadline for submissions to the Spring issue is 22 January 2026.