

THE Maryjoribanks LETTER



FOR AND ABOUT PEOPLE OF THE NAME, IN ALL ITS VARIATIONS - MARCHBANKS, MARCHBANK, MARSHBANKS, AND THE REST

NEXT YEAR IN OTTAWA

The Family Gathering and Annual General Meeting will be held next year in Ottawa, the national capital of Canada, June 3-5. The Family has never before assembled outside of Scotland.

The decision was made at the 1993 annual general meeting held on May 30 at Lockerbie in Dumfriesshire. During the discussion of the 1994 site, the Chief, Andrew Marjoribanks of that ilk, said he agreed that it was "time we played an away-fixture."

"The Family has been meeting for a few years now in Scotland and meetings have been attended by many members from across the Atlantic whose presence has been much appreciated. I expect that they would now welcome a visit from us," he said. "My father went to Canada in the early fifties and met the father of Robert, our Honorary Secretary, in Toronto. He came back and told me what a wonderful place it was and advised me to go there. I've left it for forty years, but now I'm going to take his advice!"

The President, Roger Marjoribanks of Surrey, agreed with the decision, saying it could help create closer bonds with our kinsmen and kinswomen in the United States and Canada.

Robert Marjoribanks, who now lives in Ottawa, reminded members that there is a family connection to the city through Isabel Marjoribanks, the Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, whose husband was Governor General of Canada from 1893 to 1898. It was hoped that a visit could be arranged to Rideau Hall, the vice-regal residence over which the Aberdeens presided, and to other historical sites.

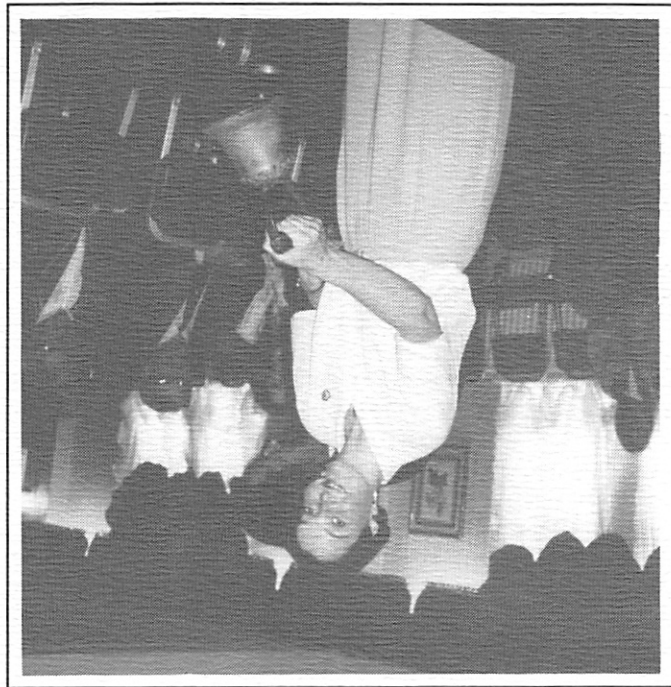
More than 30 Family members attended the meeting which was held at Lockerbie Manor Hotel, a delightful Georgian

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leaving a child or children below legal age, because it is fairly clear that his younger brother John is acting as his executor." The existence of this John Marjoribanks who describes himself as William's brother is well known. He was a highly respected merchant of Edinburgh and was admitted to the Guild in 1508, just two years after signing the newly discovered contract.

Another person who was a party to the contract was Thomas Marjoribanks of Ratho, who would have been in his early twenties at the time of the signing. He was perhaps the most distinguished of our early ancestors. He was head of the legal profession, as Lord Clerk Registrar, and shortly before his death in 1557 was Lord President of the Council. In the 1540s and 1550s he was one of the pillars of the government of Mary Queen of Scots. He acquired the ancestral lands near Lochmaben in 1536. Our chief is directly descended from this William Marjoribanks of Ratho.

"I hope that, when we have finally managed to read this document completely - and it is extraordinarily difficult - it will allow us to deduce quite a lot more about the nature of the very early Marjoribanks family in its ancestral lands," Roger said.



Cariona Marjoribanks, eldest daughter of the Chief, rings the Balmaclellan bell to officially launch the 1993 Annual Meeting in Lockerbie. "Katie" was accompanied by her parents, Andrew and Fiona, her grandmother, Thelma, and her sisters, Faith and Kirstie.

We Discover a "New" Ancestor

A "new" Marjoribanks ancestor has turned up among ancient documents in the possession of the Earl of Annandale and Hartfell, chief of the Johnstones.

During our visit to Raehills, the Earl's country seat near Lockerbie, in 1990, he granted us permission to examine his collection of historical documents. Roger Marjoribanks reported at this year's meeting that, among those documents, was "a sort of contract," dated 1506 and dealing with the ancient Marjoribanks lands near Lochmaben. It is in Latin, and in a difficult hand-writing, but it quite clearly begins:

"I, John Marjoribanks, brother of the late William Marjoribanks of that ilk . . ."

The interesting thing is that, up until now, no one had ever heard of that particular "William Marjoribanks of that ilk." The first of our ancestors of whom there is any record was Philip Marjoribanks of that ilk whose signature appears on a deed dated 1485. The newly discovered William appears to have been his eldest son.

"It appears from the wording of the contract that a completely new character is introduced," Roger said. "The text suggests that this William must have died young and suddenly,

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mansion dating from 1794, a few miles south of the original Terre de Marjoriebankis, the ancestral lands, now known as Marchbank Farm. The executive committee was unanimously re-elected for a second term.

A distinguished guest was William H. Johnston, a former president of Clan Johnston/e in America who now holds the office of Lieutenant to the Chief. Mr. Johnston and his wife, who were staying with their chief, the Earl of Annandale and Hartfell, at his nearby country seat, brought greetings from our Johnston/e "cousins."

Following the meeting, the president led a caravan of motor cars through a heavy rain to visit Lochmaben Church, a few miles west of Lockerbie, where Rev. Thomas Marjoribanks of that ilk was minister from 1834 to 1849. Dr. John Wilson, who has written histories of Lochmaben and its churches, conducted a tour of the building accompanied by the sexton. (Canadian visitors were interested to learn that Dr. Thomas Liddell, who succeeded Mr. Marjoribanks, before coming to Lochmaben was the first Principal of Queen's College, now Queen's University, at Kingston, Ontario. The College was founded in 1841 by the Presbyterian Church of Canada in association with the Church of Scotland.)

Sheltering under shared umbrellas, members scurried back to their cars and drove through the rain for another twenty minutes to the ancient Marjoribanks estates now a modern thousand-acre farm. The land was sold to a Johnstone family in the 1630s and was held by the Johnstones until about 40 years ago when it was forfeited to the Crown and was acquired by the present owner, Mrs. J.K. Braid.

The scene from the farmyard, looking out over the sodden fields and the blue hills beyond, was reminiscent of a line by Agnes Marchbank, a popular local author of the last century who, recalling happier days, wrote of this same countryside: "All is loneliness and sheep."

It was planned, after leaving Marchbank Farm, to visit the churchyard of Kirkpatrick-Juxta, the home parish, where many headstones, dating back hundreds of years, bear the names Marjoribanks, Marchbanks and Marchbank. In view of the weather, however, and the fact that the tea hour was approaching, it was decided after a brief conference that the Lockerbie Manor fireplace was preferable to a damp churchyard, and the caravan repaired to the hotel for hot tea and cream scones.

Marjoribanks in Disneyland

Among the overseas guests attending the annual general meeting in Lockerbie were Duncan Marjoribanks, his wife Karen, and their eight-year-old son Iain, of Glendale, California, who were making their first visit to Scotland.

Duncan is an animating director with the Disney Studios and was principally responsible for the creation of Sebastian, the crab, in the animated film *The Little Mermaid* and, more recently, Abu, the monkey, in *Aladdin*, which was released in the U.S. last November and has broken all box office records. He is now at work on the 1994 feature film, *Pocahontas*, about a legendary American princess. Karen, who is also an animator, is working on a new film for Universal Studios.

Duncan's brother Robin, an assistant professor of physics at the University of Toronto, also attended the meeting and later presented papers at Oxford and at the Imperial College in London. They are the sons of Robert and Nancy Marjoribanks of Ottawa.

JOURNAL TRACES U.S. FAMILY

Work is proceeding on the second issue of *The Marjoribanks Journal: Essays on the History and Genealogy of The Family* and it is expected to be published within the next few weeks.

It will contain a detailed history of Marjoribanks of that ilk, the chief's own family, covering 470 years to the present time. There will also be a history of the family in the parish of Eccles, in Berwickshire. The first known member of this branch of the family was an Adam Marjoribanks who occupied a mill in 1641. Few of his surviving descendants are known. One of them, Col. Ian Marjoribanks, who won the Military Cross and was commanding officer of the 8th Battalion of the Middlesex regiment on D Day, died about 1986. A daughter and two sisters survive him. Commander James Marjoribanks R.N. (Retd.), one of the founding members of *The Family*, is also descended of this line.

A third article will deal with the family in America, beginning with George Marjoribanks who was captured during the rebellion of 1715 in support of the exiled King James III, the Old Pretender, and was shipped to Virginia where he changed the spelling of his name to Marchbanks. The senior member of his family in the United States today seems to be Dr. Angus McDaniel Marchbanks of Bakersfield, California, who is descended from George in the unbroken senior male line.

William P. Jackson Jr. a distinguished Washington lawyer and a founding member of *The Family*, is also descended from George through his great-great-grandmother, Lucinda Marchbanks who died in 1892.

There are many families in North and South Carolina who spell their name Marshbanks. Popular genealogy has it that they are descended from a Stephen Marshbanks who is said to have come to South Carolina from England in 1776.

There seems little doubt, however, according to Angus' research and the coincidence of names and dates, that this Stephen is, in fact, Stephen Marchbanks (1770-1805), a great-grandson of George Marjoribanks, the exiled rebel.

Tabitha Rides Again!

The family name is part of the mythology of the American West. It crops up in "Rivers West," written in 1975 by Louis L'Amour, a chronicler of cowboy life and one of the best-selling authors of the 20th century.

As people have done for hundreds of years, however, Mr. L'Amour got it wrong. The heroine of his story is introduced as "a bit of a lass named Majoribanks, or some such name." ("Some such" is closer to the mark.)

He compounds his error by having another character say, "An unusual kinda name, ain't it? English maybe?"

Tabitha Majoribanks "was young, she was lovely, and she was riding a spirited chestnut gelding that she handled with superlative ease." She is the 19-year-old daughter of a New York businessman and has taken over the management of her father's commercial empire after his death. She has come west to find her brother Charles Majoribanks who has disappeared during a botanical expedition up the Missouri River. It turns out he was captured by a band of villains who plot to take over the Louisiana Territory and make it into a private kingdom.

With the help of Jean Daniel Talon, a French-Canadian, after numerous shootings, stabbings and murderous fist-fights, she foils the treasonous plot and frees her brother dear.

Marjoribanks Strikes Terror!

A few years ago a reader reported having read about a statue that once stood in the town square of Tabriz, in Iran, and which was referred to as "Marjoribanks in his cloak."

It turned out that the statue was not really of a Marjoribanks but of a former Shah of Iran, Prince Mohammed Ali Reza, who was so feared that a travel writer, to avoid mentioning the Shah's name, decided to refer to him, in a sort of code, as "Marjoribanks."

The writer, as it happens, was Robert Byron and his book, written in the 1930s, is called "The Road to Oxiana" and is published in a paperback edition in the United Kingdom and Canada as part of the Penguin Travel Library.

As Byron entered Iran (then called Persia) on September 29, 1933, he commented to his companion and guide on "the indignity of the people's clothes."

"Why does the Shah make them wear those hats?"

"Shh," his companion replies, "you mustn't mention the Shah out loud. Call him Mr Smith."

Byron protests that he gets confused with ordinary names.

"We had better call him Marjoribanks, if we want to remember who we mean," he says.

"All right," his companion agrees. "And you had better write it too, in case they confiscate your diary."

Thereafter, during all of their time in Iran, Byron and his companion, when they mean to indicate the Shah, say "Marjoribanks" instead.

That same evening, Byron records, they dined in a room which was decorated with a tapestry, "depicting a female Persia reposing in the arms of Marjoribanks."

An entry in Byron's diary on October 5, does nothing to enhance the family's reputation. He writes: "Marjoribanks rules this country by fear and the ultimate fear is that of the royal boot."

Arriving at Tabriz later that day, Byron records :

"The features of Tabriz are a view of plush-coloured mountains, approached by lemon-coloured foothills; a drinkable white wine and a disgusting beer; several miles of brick-vaulted bazaars; and a new municipal garden containing a bronze statue of Marjoribanks in a cloak."

Marjoribanks and his cloak, like the Shah himself, are long since gone.

The Ecclesiastical Tradition

One of the figures supporting the coat of arms of Marjoribanks of that ilk is a clergyman, symbolizing the part played by members of the family in the church.

Dr. John Wilson in his book, "The Churches of Lochmaben," says that Rev. Thomas Marjoribanks of that ilk, who preached in Lochmaben church, "was unfortunate enough to be parish minister in 1843 when the Disruption took place." In that year, protesting what they considered abuses of power in the Church of Scotland, more than a third of the ministers left to found the Free Church. Thomas chose to remain in the Church of Scotland, although most of his parishioners left. In 1849 he moved to the parish of Stenton in Midlothian.

Thomas's son, George Marjoribanks of that ilk, succeeded his father as minister of Stenton. He took a Doctor of Divinity degree at Edinburgh and had a distinguished career in the church. His eldest son Thomas, the grandfather of the present chief, was also a Doctor of Divinity from Edinburgh and during his career in the church served as a minister in Berwickshire, Perthshire, Midlothian and East Lothian.

SCHOOLBOY TELLS MAJOR'S STORY

David Kennedy, a 14-year-old pupil of Roger Marjoribanks in Guildford, Surrey, has done some diligent research that has turned up more information about Major John Marjoribanks, the British hero of the 1871 Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina.

Major Marjoribanks was mentioned in the family history written in 1943 by Rev. Dr. Thomas Marjoribanks of that ilk and again in The Marjoribanks Letter No.3, in 1989, and No.6, 1991. During the battle, a critical one in the American War of Independence, he turned the tide against the Americans, even though he was fatally wounded. The owner of the plantation on which he died designated his grave with a wooden marker which was later replaced with a stone monument which is still to be seen.

Given the few facts that were known about Major Marjoribanks' life, David was asked to write an imaginary biography, as an historical exercise.

"An imaginary biography didn't appeal to him," his teacher says, "so with great initiative he approached the museum of the Green Howards, who are inheritors of the major's own regiment, the 19th Regiment of Foot. He produced a number of copies of regimental magazines which give us a great deal of additional detail about the Battle of Eutaw Springs, about Major Marjoribanks' life and career in the army."

John Marjoribanks was a member of the branch of the family who first appeared in the parish of Eccles in Berwickshire, near Coldstream, in the 1640s. He was born about 1732 and, at the age of 17, joined the Scotch-Dutch regiment as an ensign, the lowest of the commissioned ranks. The regiment was composed entirely of Scots but was stationed permanently in Holland. (A cousin, Alexander Marjoribanks of Carlowrie, achieved the distinguished rank of Major General while serving in the same regiment.)

He was transferred to the 19th Regiment of Foot in 1757 with the rank of lieutenant, was promoted captain in 1763 and major in 1780. He married Marjorie Gordon about 1761 and they had a son John. Major Marjoribanks was wounded at the siege of Belle Isle during the Seven Years War and later commanded a corps of light infantry in Ireland.

In 1781 the 19th Regiment of Foot embarked for Charleston, South Carolina, to help subdue the rebelling colonists. Major Marjoribanks was a battalion commander in a mixed force which was surprised by the Americans at Eutaw Springs on September 6 of that year. He fought gallantly and is credited with having saved the British from a disastrous defeat. He died of his wounds six weeks later.

Leslia Marjoribanks

Leslia Marjoribanks, who was for a number of years headmistress of the distinguished Henrietta Barnett School in Hampstead, London, died on March 22, 1993. She had a master's degree in history from Cambridge University and served as a Justice of the Peace. She retired in 1988.

She was a half-sister of Roger Marjoribanks of Guildford, Surrey, and they met for the first time at the Family Gathering and Annual General Meeting at the Marchbank Hotel in Balerno in 1990.

WHAT TO DO AND SEE IN OTTAWA

Ottawa, the site of our 1994 meeting, is the national capital of Canada.

English is the maternal language of about three quarters of the residents of Ottawa, the rest speak mostly French. On the other side of the Ottawa River, in Hull, Québec, about 90 per cent of the people speak mainly French.

Street names, traffic directions, and many shop signs in Ottawa are in both languages but in Québec, all signs, by provincial law, are in French only. The separatist movement (for an independent Québec) is in abeyance, for the time being, and Gallic hospitality prevails. (Waiters are conspicuously more obliging than the Parisian breed.)

During the time of our meeting, daytime temperatures would normally be about 20 degrees Celsius (70 degrees F.).

Many of the things worth seeing in Ottawa are a few steps away from the Chateau Laurier Hotel, where we will meet. The parliament buildings are just next door. That's the best place to see an honest-to-goodness Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman. There are always a few on duty in the grounds, with their scarlet tunics and Boy Scout hats, and they seem happy to pose for photographs. In the same place every summer morning you can see a plausible imitation of the traditional British changing-of-the-guard ceremony performed by Canadian guardsmen (and some guardswomen) and their band. Guided tours of the buildings are conducted at intervals during the day.

Rideau Hall, the Governor General's official residence, is about a mile north of the hotel. Between the hotel and Rideau Hall is the new and spectacular National Gallery of Canada, which houses an impressive collection of Canadian and international art. The Canadian Museum of Civilization, on the Québec side of the river, was designed by Harold Cardinal, a Canadian architect of Indian ancestry, and in its form reflects the Indian's sensitivity to the land.

The National Arts Centre, across Confederation Square from the hotel, was created for the production of plays, opera, concerts and other entertainments. Its four auditoriums provide 3,700 seats for some 700,000 people who attend about 900 performances every year.

Between the hotel and the parliament buildings is the first set of locks of the Rideau Canal. The canal was built under the supervision of Lt. Col. John By of the Royal Engineers to allow shipping to go from Montreal to the Great Lakes and western Canada without passing through a narrow stretch of the St. Lawrence River where it would come under fire from American guns on the south shore. The canal emerges in Lake Ontario at Kingston. By the time it was finished, in 1832, the danger of attack by the Americans had ended and it served no useful purpose. Its 47 locks now accommodate people who travel for their own amusement. In winter the first six miles of the frozen canal become the world's longest skating rink.

Ottawa is just a half-day's drive from Montreal. Toronto or Quebec City can be reached in a day by road. You would need two days to get to Niagara Falls. Trains are not so fast or so frequent in Canada as in Britain but you could reach most destinations on the East coast overnight by rail, or in a drive of two or three days. If you have a notion to visit the Rockies, however, remember that Vancouver is 2,200 miles away by air – a flight of about five hours or several days on the train.

Notes from the Secretary

I have included a form with this issue of The Letter which you should fill out as soon as you can to let me know what you would like to do during the three days we'll be in Ottawa next summer. The program will be designed to accommodate your interests and you'll be getting a detailed agenda and a registration form within the next few weeks.

* * *

We manage our business affairs on a slim budget to keep membership affordable by everyone. The best way to get on a sound financial footing would be to recruit more members and share the costs more widely. If you have a cousin or an auntie or a couple of nephews who you think might be interested in becoming more involved with The Family, please send me their names and complete postal addresses.

And make sure your own membership is up to date. The expiry date appears in the bottom right-hand corner of your membership card.

* * *

If you would like back copies of The Letter they're \$3.00 each in Canadian funds or the equivalent in other currencies. Please let me know which ones you would like. They were published in 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 (February and August); 1991 and 1992. Family ties are also available. Prices in local currencies are: U.K., £7.00; U.S. \$12.50; Canada, \$14.00; Australia \$16.00; New Zealand, \$21.00. The Marjoribanks Journal No. 1, is priced at £2.50 in U.K. funds, \$5.00 Canadian or U.S., and the equivalent in other currencies. As a matter of policy, all prices are calculated on manufacturing costs plus postage.

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Please keep in touch. I'm always happy to hear your news and answer your questions. I'll see you in Ottawa!

Robert Marjoribanks
Honorary Secretary

The Marjoribanks Letter

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