



# THE Marjoribanks LETTER

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

## HADDO HOUSE, PITMEDDEN STIR BOYHOOD MEMORIES

Those attending the Marjoribanks Family Gathering in Aberdeen June 8, 9 and 10 visited two historic properties with strong family connections. At Haddo House, the ancestral seat of the Earls of Aberdeen and Ishbel Marjoribanks's home after her marriage to the seventh earl in 1877, we were warmly welcomed by the staff of The National Trust for Scotland which now manages the property.

"For me, going round the old house was fascinating," says Andrew Marjoribanks of that ilk, the hereditary head of the family. "I hadn't been there for more than thirty years and many of the rooms were just the same, even the children's table in the dining room where we used to sit while our parents were dining at the main table. Those were the days when Haddo House was still the private home of Lord and Lady Aberdeen with whom my parents had become friends, after settling in the neighbourhood on their return from the Sudan in 1955."

The tour of the house was specially arranged for the Saturday morning since they don't normally open until the afternoon. The staff made frequent references to Ishbel and books in the library not usually handled by visitors were opened at pages showing photographs of Ishbel and members of her family as well as visitors to the house, including King George V, Queen Mary, Prime Minister Gladstone and many other distinguished people of the day. A highlight of the tour was a visit to the beautiful family chapel which was added to the house shortly after the Aberdeens' wedding. Ishbel has written about it in her memoirs: "Baptisms, marriages, funerals have all taken place within those walls, which hold associations of joy and of sorrow, of hours of difficulty and seasons of great thankfulness." While members of The Family sat reverently in the pews, Alastair Marjoribanks of Coldstream, our talented vice-president, seated himself at the organ and played the music of the Twenty-Third Psalm, "The Lord is My Shepherd."

### Pitmedden

The Great Garden of Pitmedden, a few miles south of Haddo House in Aberdeenshire, was originally laid out in 1675 by Sir Alexander Seton, First Baronet of Pitmedden.

The elaborate floral designs were recreated in the 1950s under the supervision of William Logan Marjoribanks of that ilk - familiarly known as Will - who was at that time representative of the National Trust for Scotland for north-eastern Scotland and was responsible, not only for Pitmedden, but for a number of historic castles as well.

Andrew and his brother John, both have happy memories of Pitmedden House where they spent many of their childhood years.

"The house was built gradually between the 12th and 20th centuries and we lived in the older wing," John says. "It had a large drawing room, a study, a dining room made out of the original kitchens with a great stone, arched fireplace, about twelve feet



The Chief explains a weathered stone plaque on one of the out-buildings of Haddo House. It shows a coat of arms, surmounted by the motto of the Earls of Aberdeen: "Fortuna Sequatur" ("May Fortune Follow"). Below, it reads: "This house was built by John, 7th Earl of Aberdeen, and [Ishbel] Marjoribanks, Countess of Aberdeen, A.D. 1905. The main building was designed in 1733.

across, and a modern kitchen on the ground floor. Upstairs were five bedrooms and two bathrooms."

The Chief recalls that he worked in the garden during school holidays and for a year after leaving the Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh and before entering the University of Edinburgh. He and John used to play croquet on the front lawn, often photographed by curious visitors.

"I was particularly interested to see again the miles of box hedging that forms the patterns in the four main parterres" he says. "They were trimmed to such geometric perfection that they seemed to be solid green structures. I remember trimming them when they were first planted in the fifties."

### The Sudan

Both Andrew and John were born while their father, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh Forestry School, was serving as Chief Conservator of Forests in the Sudan. He played a key role in ensuring an adequate supply of timber during the Second World War.

Both children were experienced travelers, even before they were born. The Sudanese doctors recommended that women go somewhere cooler for their confinement. When Andrew was born, in 1941, the war was still being fought in North Africa so his mother traveled south to South Africa where she herself had been born

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## Sir James Marks 90th Birthday

Sir James Milne Marjoribanks K.C.M.G., a distinguished British diplomat and President Emeritus of The Marjoribanks Family, celebrated his ninetieth birthday on May 29 at a quiet party with family and friends.

Hosts of the celebration, which was held in an Edinburgh hotel, were his daughter Patricia Baillie Strong and her husband Stuart who traveled from Belgium for the occasion. They were accompanied by their two sons, Alastair and Jonathan, Alastair's wife Gabriel and their stepson Michael. Sir James's nephew John Marjoribanks of Berwickshire and his wife Andrea were also present. His sister Anne, who recently broke a leg, was unable to attend and the Chief and his wife Fiona were out of the country.

Sir James, a brother of the late chief, William Marjoribanks of that ilk, entered the Foreign Service in 1934 and his first posting was to the British Embassy in Peking. He later represented his country in Hankow, Marseilles, Bucharest, Jacksonville, Florida, and New York. He was the first British ambassador to the European Community.

The minister of the Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh made a speech in his honour and everyone enjoyed the birthday cake.

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and where she still had relatives who would look after her. She stayed with an uncle, a mine manger in East Transvaal. Andrew was born in a place called Pilgrim's Rest and two weeks later he and his mother traveled by train to Durban and then returned to the Sudan in an Empire Airways flying boat.

When John was ready to be born, in 1944, the Allies had cleared the Germans out of North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean but still occupied the rest of Europe. She couldn't go home to Britain but at least she could go north to Cyprus.

"She told me she had a terrible journey," John recalls, "and could vividly remember being stranded at Wafi Halfa on the Sudan-Egypt border, eight months pregnant, nursing a vomiting three-year-old with diarrhea in a temperature touching 135 degrees Fahrenheit. So, I was born in the General Hospital in Nicosia, left Cyprus at three weeks of age, and have not yet been back!"

### **Home Again**

Their father's appointment ended in 1955 when Sudan was granted self-government and he returned home to take up his duties with the National Trust for Scotland. Two years earlier severe gales had caused incalculable damage to valuable timber on NTS properties in northeast Scotland and Will was ideally fitted to take on the task of rebuilding the ravaged forests.

The Earl of Wemyss and March, who was for many years chairman of the National Trust for Scotland, recently recalled an exciting night in the late chief's career as a custodian of historic property. A fire broke out in Carthes Castle, a beautiful 16th-century property near Banchory, about fifteen miles west of Aberdeen. Will managed to confine the fire to the east wing and saved the main body of the castle by having the staff gather the castle's entire supply of blankets, soak them in water, and lay them against all of the connecting doors.

The family lived for seventeen years at Pitmedden House until Will and his wife, the former Thelma Williamson, bought a charming old manse which they called Kirklands of Forglan, on the banks of the Deveron River near Turriff and within easy reach of both Haddo House and Pitmedden and other historic properties which once were in his charge.

He went on working for the Trust for another three years and retired in 1975. He died in 1991 and Thelma in 2000.

## WE WILL MEET NEXT YEAR IN CANADA'S MOUNTAINS

The 2001 Annual General Meeting indicated a preference for holding the next Gathering in Kelowna, British Columbia, in September of 2002.

Kelowna, about two hundred miles east of Vancouver in the beautiful Okanagan Valley, was the site of a 480-acre ranch which Lord and Lady Aberdeen purchased in 1890, mainly with the intention of providing a gainful occupation for Ishbel's brother Coutts who recently had suffered a financially disastrous experience as assistant manager of the Horse-Shoe Ranch near Towner, North Dakota. The British Columbia ranch was named Guisachan, meaning place of firs, after Ishbel's father's highland estate in Scotland

### **Coldstream**

Nearby, at Vernon, the Aberdeens later bought the 13,000-acre Coldstream Ranch which they intended to use for the production of fruit and hops. Neither of these ranching operations succeeded but, by their efforts, Lord and Lady Aberdeen demonstrated the potential of the Okanagan Valley as one of Canada's most important fruit-growing areas.

Coutts's ranch house has been restored along with two and a half acres of surrounding land designated Guisachan Heritage Park. The ranch house itself is now a delightful restaurant, displaying many photographs and other souvenirs of the Aberdeens' tenure.

Widely regarded as a high-living remittance man, Coutts was for many years a colorful character in Vernon and his legends abound. Ursula Surtees, who is related to Coutts by marriage (her mother-in-law, Ishbel Surtees, was Coutts's daughter) and was until recently director and curator of the Kelowna Museum, contributed some Coutts stories for the local newspaper.

Quite early after his arrival in the Okanagan his antics managed to antagonize the local sheriff. As Christmas drew near he invited the sheriff, as a conciliatory gesture in the spirit of the season, to have Christmas dinner with him. As the meal drew to a close Coutts asked how his guest had enjoyed the meal.

"Excellent!" the sheriff proclaimed. "A memorable meal!"

Coutts then announced that he had stolen every item of food and drink they had enjoyed, adding "And as a receiver of stolen goods, you are in no position to bring charges against me!"

It's unlikely that Coutts actually did steal the food and drink but his reputation in the town was such that the sheriff never could really be sure.

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## Spot Ogotogo!

If you have not yet glimpsed the Loch Ness monster you can try your luck next year with Ogotogo.

Ogotogo, popularly known as Ogie, is said to haunt the ninety-mile-long, one-thousand-foot deep Okanagan Lake in British Columbia and is believed to be snake-like, dark in colour, one to two feet in diameter and at least twenty-one feet long with a head resembling a goat or a horse. There's a statue of him in Kelowna's waterfront park

There's a \$2 million dollar reward for anyone who can prove his existence without harming him. Okanagan University College will verify your evidence in collaboration with a distinguished group of international cryptozoologists.

You will need to get an Official Ogotogo Search Permit which is available (not surprisingly) from the Tourist Office

## THE FAMILY NAME IN ITS BEWILDERING MUTATIONS

The official Marjoribanks genealogical data base now contains information covering 2,725 members of the family - living and dead - with their connecting links

Chronologically they range from Philip Marjoribanks, who thrived around the end of the 15th century, to Devlyn R. Padberg, the grandson of Colonel Bill Marchbanks and his wife Linda, who was born earlier this year in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Most of this data was provided by the many enthusiastic amateur genealogists in the family who have spent years combing through government records and church registers and, of course, as a result of the excellent work done by Roger Marjoribanks, the family historian and genealogist.

### Count the Ways

Browsing through the list reveals the many different ways we spell our family name. It's almost certain that we all began as Marjoribankses but why and when did so many of us change the spelling and in so many different ways?

George Marjoribanks, the famous Jacobite rebel changed the spelling of his name to: Marchbanks when he arrived in the New World. It may be that, like many of us, he got tired of explaining,

"It's spelled M-a-r-j-o-r-i-b-a-n-k-s but it's pronounced Marchbanks."

George's farming neighbours in Virginia would not put up for long with that nonsense.

For the same reason, when Samuel Mandeville Marjoribanks came from Perthshire in Scotland to South Carolina, he just chopped seven letters off the front of his name and called himself Banks.

Roger says that around 1650 in Scotland the name was almost invariably spelled Marjoribanks but, by 1760, nearly everyone in the home parish of Kirkpatrick-Juxta was spelling it the way most Americans do today.

### Marshbanks

Somewhere along the way, however, some of George's descendants decided to change the name once more. They called themselves Marshbanks. Not many people in those days could write their name and it may be that the soft sh sound seemed more genteel to Southern ears.

Benjamin Gilford Marchbanks, the son of Stephen Perry Marchbanks, spelled his name Marchbanks, like his father and all of his ancestors back to George the Jacobite. But all of his seven children, and all their descendants, for whatever reason, called themselves Marshbanks.

It happened again in the next generation. Benjamin's nephew

William Willis Marchbanks, spelled his name Marchbanks but all of his seven children were called Marshbanks.

Norwood Calhoun Harrison, another descendant of Stephen Perry Marchbanks, wrote a few years ago to deplore what he called - perhaps unfairly - "the deliberate corruption of the name."

He said the name of his great-grandfather, Francis Marion Marchbanks, was shown that way on his gravestone but his wife's name - on the very same stone - was spelled Marshbanks.

A recent example of this name-changing involves Doyle Marshbanks of Denver, Colorado. His father, Lester Guy, spelled his name Marchbanks and he signed Doyle's report cards that way up to about 1935. After that, for some reason, the name becomes Marshbanks and his children, of course, followed suit. One of Doyle's brothers succeeded in changing his name back to Marchbanks but his brothers were afraid to try in case it confused their army records. They worried that they would be called up a second time for military service - once as Marchbanks and once as Marshbanks, so they stuck with Marshbanks.

### Marchbank

There are at least three branches of the family who spell their name Marchbank, without the final s. The most numerous are the descendants of families who emigrated from Annandale in 1825 to the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. There is no record of their having changed the spelling of their name. The two other Marchbank families, however, at one time spelled their name in the traditional way - or almost!

The ancestors of George Marchbank of Derbyshire, our immediate past president, were cattle drovers who migrated from Scotland into England. His great-great-great grandfather was Bernard, born in 1766, and he and his father before him called themselves Marjoribank without the final s. Bernard's son James, however, started calling himself Marchbank and all his descendants have done the same.

Then there's the family of the late Alec Creighton Marchbank who died in Bergenfield, New Jersey in 1998. Alec traveled frequently to Moffat in Dumfriesshire looking for his ancestors. The earliest one he found was not a Marchbank at all but a Robert Marjoribanks who lived in Dumfriesshire around the middle of the 17th century. Although Robert spelled his name Marjoribanks, his son James and all James's descendants to the present day, for reasons known only to themselves, have changed it to Marchbank.

Our late Chief liked to say, "The name Marjoribanks was never invented twice." Perhaps so, but it has undergone a number of bewildering mutations.

### Iseabail

People called Marjoribanks who despair of ever hearing their name pronounced correctly will sympathize with Ishbel Marjoribanks, Lady Aberdeen. She must have had trouble with her first name as well as her last.

In her book, "The Musings of a Scottish Granny," she explains that her father all his life spent part of the year in the highlands and developed a great fondness for the Gaelic.

As result she was given the name Ishbel, which is an anglicized form of the Gaelic name Iseabail, often spelled Isobel or Isabel. She explains it was pronounced as if it were spelled Shebail - presumably with the accent on the second syllable - and she was "extraordinarily proud" of it.

### Along the Whisky Trail

Several members attending the Aberdeen Gathering took advantage of the opportunity to tour the Whisky Trail. (Note that the Scots spell whisky without an e.)

There are eight distilleries and one cooperage (where they make the wooden casks) on the seventy-mile trail beside the River Spey. At each stop you can learn the history of a particular whisky and see how its made and, of course, the hospitable hosts will invite you to sample "a wee dram."

Rita Marie DeBruhl Haynes of Satellite Beach, Florida and her partner Bill Poland very wisely hired a chauffeur before making the tour and swore him to absolute abstinence.

## CYCLING: A LONG-STANDING FAMILY TRADITION

Cycling seems to run in the family.

Alexander Marjoribanks recently cycled almost 1,400 miles around the perimeter of Scotland to raise £3,500 to support his studies of the Viet Nameese rain forest.

More recently his uncle, our Chief, while working as a consultant in Texas, cycled 175 miles from Houston to Austin in just over nine and a half hours to raise \$1,000 in support of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Now Alexander's father, John Marjoribanks of Eden House in Gavinton, Berwickshire has undertaken to cycle 260 miles from London to Paris (presumably he will be ferried over the Channel!) in aid of Action Research, one of Britain's leading medical research charities which investigates solutions to disabling conditions that affect people of all ages.

John's action is particularly admirable since he was disabled himself last summer when he broke a hip in a cycling accident.

"I was bolted back together and marvelously looked after by the U.K. National Health Service, all for free, so I thought it was my turn to put something back," John says.

### A Moonlight Elopement

The staff of Haddo House, in preparation for our visit, produced some background notes for us about Lady Aberdeen's mother, Isabella Hogg.

The Hogg family were early Protestant settlers who emigrated to Ireland from Scotland in the 17th century. Isabella's great-grandfather, Edward Hogg, was a linen merchant in Dublin. There was strong opposition from both families to his intention to marry Rose O'Neill, the daughter of the Rector of Largie. Her family objected to her marrying a tradesman and his family could not approve his marrying outside their Quaker faith.

Ishbel in her memoirs tells us how love conquered all.

"On a fine moonlight night in August 1733, the Rector was called to attend the sick-bed of a respected parishioner who lived several miles away. He had his horse saddled and rode away on his mission. About an hour afterwards a man on a handsome mount took up his position at the turn of the road leading from the Rectory to the town of Antrim. Presently a lady, closely muffled, passed out from the avenue with a woman attendant and, with the aid of the latter, was lifted onto the broad pillion behind the rider. A fast ride of some miles brought the truant to the cottage of a country clergyman, who awaited the couple, and lost no time in making them man and wife."

The eldest son of this couple, Sir James Weir Hogg, Ishbel's grand-father, attended Trinity College, Dublin. He was called to the Irish bar in 1813, at the age of twenty-three, and two years later, established a lucrative practice in Calcutta where he met and married Mary Swinton, daughter of a Borders family with holdings in Berwickshire and Durham. He came back to England in 1833, was elected a Member of Parliament, became Chairman of the East India Company and was created a baronet. Their daughter, Isabella Hogg, Ishbel's mother, married Dudley Coumts Marjoribanks, the first Lord Tweedmouth in 1848.

But there is another connection between the Marjoribanks and the Hogg families.

Ishbel's brother, Archibald, died in 1900 and five years later his widow, the former Myssie Brown of Nashville, Tennessee, married Archie's cousin, Douglas Hogg, the son of Sir James Weir Hogg. Douglas and Myssie had two sons, Quentin and Neil, who were raised along with Archie's son and daughter, Edward and Isabel.

The family's involvement in cycling goes back to the very beginning.

Kirkpatrick Macmillan (1813-1878), a Scottish blacksmith living in Courthill, Dumfriesshire, built the world's first pedal-powered bicycle. In 1842 he made the 140-mile round trip from Courthill to Glasgow at an average speed of about eight miles per hour. He taught his niece, Mary Marchbank, to ride the bike and she became the world's first woman cyclist. Mary was born at Keir in 1839, the daughter of George Marchbank and his wife, the former Mary Isabella Macmillan, sister of the inventor.

(If you would like to support John's ride, you can send him a cheque or money order payable to either "John L. Marjoribanks' or "Action Research."

His address is:

John L. Marjoribanks Esq.  
Eden House, South Street  
Gavinton, Berwickshire TD11 3QS  
Scotland.

He promises to send a full report to all contributors.)

### Photographing Trains

John Marjoribanks of Vancouver must have been one of the world's most dedicated train photographers. From the 1950s to the late 1970s he made four thousand slides of Canadian and American steam and diesel engines.

He was born in Toronto in 1932. His father was born in Falkirk, Scotland, in 1891. John worked for a number of years in Montreal for the Bell Telephone Company and then moved to Vancouver in 1978 and opened a gallery specializing in 20th century art. He was an artist himself, working in oils, water colours and pen and ink. In addition to trains he photographed ships and many of the ancient French-Canadian stone houses along the Richelieu River and on Ile d'Orléans near Québec City.

He died in 1981 at the age of 49. His widow, the former Eleanor Foster of St.-Lambert, Québec, is engaged in a dispute with a Vancouver dealer over the rights to the train photographs.

### The Marjoribanks Letter

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