



THE

# Marjoribanks

Vol.2, No.5, April 2013

LETTER

FOR & ABOUT PEOPLE OF THE NAME, IN ALL ITS VARIATIONS - MARCHBANKS, MARCHBANK, MARSHBANK & THE REST

## Clan Marjoribanks Society AGM, June 2014



Plans are afoot to hold the AGM of the Clan Marjoribanks Society to coincide with the re-enactment of the Battle of Bannockburn during the weekend of 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. This is part of the Scottish Homecoming Celebrations in 2014. The Clan Marjoribanks AGM will take place in Bathgate on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> June.

Bathgate is a town with many historical associations with the Marjoribanks clan. The banner of Alexander Marjoribanks of that ilk, the "auld laird of Balbardie" is paraded around the town each year (as shown in the picture above). Alexander, who is the great-great-great-grandfather of the present Chief, mortgaged his property so that Bathgate Academy could be built. There will be a small exhibition of Marjoribanks memorabilia on view. We will also be visiting the remnants of Balbardie House close by. This was the former ancestral home of the Marjoribanks family. A pamphlet describing the other places in Scotland associated with the Marjoribanks clan will also be on view.

Festivities will start on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> June at the Edinburgh home of Patricia Baillie Strong, President of the Marjoribanks Clan Society. Members of the Clan are kindly invited to a welcome reception there.

Carol Poole, travel agent, is coming to speak with a group convening on August 10th this year at Reedy River Baptist Church, Greenville, SC to make a presentation on the options and estimated costs of the proposed trip from the USA to Scotland. Those wishing to attend should contact Carol at tel. (864) 631-1115 or by e-mail at [ognamruf@charter.net](mailto:ognamruf@charter.net).

## Roger Marjoribanks 17 May 1933 – 28 February 2013

Roger Marjoribanks, the Clan Marjoribanks Society Genealogist (shown on the right in his Alderman's robes) died in February.

He graduated from Oxford University and became a dedicated schoolmaster, teaching history at boys' schools, encouraging youngsters in rugby and cricket.

He loved politics and met his future wife Sylvia Anne Shirley (Sue) at the Young Conservatives, where he was a leading light. He called her his prop and stay and essential collaborator in the business of life.

Following his career as a schoolmaster, he entered local government with a genuine desire to make the town a better place.

He acted as a councillor on Guildford Borough Council between 1983 to 1991. As Chairman of the Arts and Recreation Committee, he gave unwavering support for the development of the Spectrum Leisure complex there and the saving of Stoke Mill. He wrote a definitive work on the history of Burpham, the Guildford suburb where he lived, "Burpham – Norman manor to suburban village".

From 2001-2010, he was the Hon. Remembrancer for Guildford Borough Council, meticulously researching and



recording Guildford's daily life for posterity. During this time, he produced the historical town centre walk. When he was forced to retire from this position due to ill health, he was made Hon. Alderman. As one of his friends remarked, "he was the best mayor the borough (Guildford) never had".

In the later years of his life, he concentrated on researching the Marjoribanks Clan Family History, writing many articles and answering innumerable questions about the genealogy of members of our Clan.

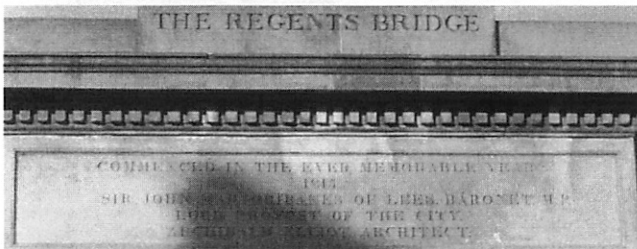
He was also as member of the Freemasons and took part in several lodges, particularly Burma Kohima. He was adept at giving lectures and writing articles to help fellow masons understand the intricacies of their craft.

He was a kind sociable gentleman, a scholar and a true friend to those who knew him. His bravery throughout his 4-year long battle with a rare form of cancer was remarkable. He will be sorely missed.

## Places of Marjoribanks' Family Interest in Scotland

Those members of the clan who are visiting Scotland may wish to visit places with Marjoribanks connections. John Marjoribanks, brother of the Chief, has prepared a pamphlet describing places of interest to the Marjoribanks clan in Scotland. Below are a few of the entries for Edinburgh.

### The Regent's Bridge, Waterloo Place



At Princes Street's east end, this bridge between Calton Hill and Princes Street provides a fitting entrance to the city from London. It was built in 1815 – 1819, while Sir John Marjoribanks of Lees was Lord Provost. His name appears on the triumphal arch on the north side of the bridge. Good site for a photo!

### Signet Library, Royal Mile

In Parliament Square, there are records of Andrew Marjoribanks of that Ilk and his son, Andrew, Writers to the Signet in the 18th century. There is also a fascinating manuscript by Charles Marjoribanks, M.P., son of Sir John, giving an insight into his own life and other family members.

### City Chambers, Royal Mile

Panels of Marjoribankses who have been Lords Provost and holders of other city offices are on display in this beautiful Adam building.

### Colinton

This village at the foot of the Pentland Hills, is now part of the city. The panelling in the village church, next to the Water of Leith, commemorates the Rev Thomas Marjoribanks of that Ilk, Minister here for many years in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is buried with his wife in the kirkyard. Also buried there are his son, Sir James Marjoribanks, Sir James' wife Sonya and many other members of the Marjoribanks clan.

### Edinburgh Airport

At the west end of the main runway lie the ruins of Hallyards Castle, bought by the Marjoribanks family in 1696. Edward Marjoribanks of Hallyards was heir to the Lees estate in Coldstream in the 18th century.

### Ratho village

Thomas Marjoribanks of Ratho, Mary Queen of Scots' Lord Clerk Register, acquired the Ratho estate in 1540. Little is left. His great grandson John sold it in 1614 and shortly afterwards acquired the Balbardie estate in West Lothian.

### Regent Terrace

13 Regent Terrace is the flat formerly occupied by Sir James and Lady (Sonya)

Marjoribanks. Sir James was the diplomat who negotiated Britain's entry into the EEC in 1973. He was the younger brother of the previous chief, William Marjoribanks of that Ilk. The flat is

now occupied by Sir James's daughter Patricia and her husband Stuart Baillie Strong.



## Alexander Erskine, b. 1840, Australia

Before he died, Roger Marjoribanks discovered a previously unknown birth – that of Alexander Erskine Marjoribanks in 1840, son of Erskine Marjoribanks. The interest in this new birth is because Alexander Erskine's grandfather was Alexander Marjoribanks of Balbardie, who founded Bathgate Academy. If there are any descendants of Alexander Erskine in Australia, they would be distant cousins of the Chief. If an Australian member of the clan can help, please let us know. Unfortunately, Roger thought that Alexander Erskine probably died young.

Erskine Marjoribanks was youngest child of Alexander Marjoribanks of Balbardie and emigrated to Australia as a young man in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. He married Margaret Neurcomen Gore and struck it rich in gold fields. In 1842, he seems to have been an upstanding member of the local community as he is recorded as proposing a councillor for Macquarie Ward. By 1850, however, things have gone



wrong. He writes from Maryborough gold field to the Colonial Secretary complaining that he has had no reply to his application for an auctioneer's license to handle sales of government goods. He was told that his application had run out of time. However, later, another man's application for the same post is accepted. Roger wondered if Erskine might have taken to drink by this point!

In 1853, miners in the gold fields of New South Wales became very angry when a licence fee of 30 shillings a month was imposed. In the Turon Valley, tempers reached a peak. Men bought ammunition and speakers urged sedition. The leader of the rebels was our own fiery Erskine Marjoribanks who was said to drink heavily and become very eloquent when provoked by injustice. The Turon valley miners were eventually subdued by military force but they had some success because the licence fee was later reduced from 30 to 10 shillings a month. Erskine died in 1871, aged 59.

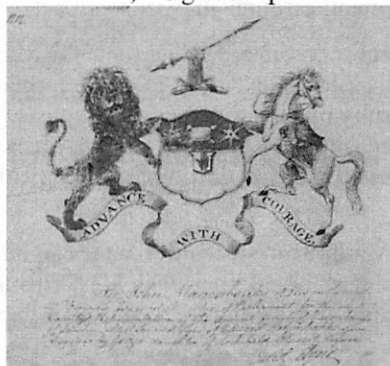
Roger suggested that somebody could make up an interesting historical novel from the above bare facts. A young man with his father's legacy jingling in his pocket, comes out to Australia to make his way in life. For some time, he does well enough to be regarded as a reputable citizen, marries and has a child. But tragedy strikes. His baby dies, he takes to the bottle and his marriage breaks down. His brother is no help. He becomes a drifter, maybe supporting himself by writing letters and speaking for the illiterate in court. Then comes the Turon Valley affair, which does him no good at all and is followed by a long slow decline until it's "Play me didgeridoo, Blue" time...

## Marjoribanks of Lees

In early 2013, Roger Marjoribanks published a comprehensive account of his ancestors, the Marjoribanks of Lees. This authoritative description includes all his research and makes fascinating reading. Here is a short summary.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, James Marjoribanks bought the estate of Lees in the Scottish borders. In 1762, his great-nephew Edward Marjoribanks inherited the estate (remarkably, 13 other potential Marjoribanks heirs over two generations had died). Edward was a wine merchant and, possibly a surreptitious Jacobite, living in Bordeaux, France. He befriended the owner of Coutts Bank Thomas Coutts, who was to become extremely important to the family fortunes.

Edward had five sons - John (later Sir John) of the Coldstream guards; Campbell, chairman of the East India Company; Stewart, owner of a shipping company and MP for



Hythe; Edward, senior partner at Coutts Bank and James, judge in the East India Company's administration of India.

John shrewdly married Alison Ramsay, the daughter of a wealthy banker, and settled at the estate of Eccles in the Borders before returning to Edinburgh. There he enjoyed the patronage of the Marquess of Bute. By 1808, John had bought himself a vote in Buteshire. In 1811, he joined Edinburgh Town Council and in 1812, John, with the assistance of the Marquess of Bute, was elected MP for Buteshire.

In 1813, John became Lord Provost of Edinburgh, building a new jail and Regent bridge to allow access to the main road to England. The bridge still stands with his inscription on it. In 1815, he became MP for Berwickshire and was created the 1st Baronet of Lees (the picture shows his matriculation document). In 1816 he acted as Assistant Grand Master of the Scottish Masons to the Prince of Wales. Sir John sold Eccles and retired to Lees which he rebuilt as a fine Regency house before dying in 1833.

Sir John's eldest son, Edward, was a clerk in the East India Company but died young succumbing to drink and debt.

William, Sir John's second son, a China Seas captain, inherited the title and estate but died in 1834, leaving two young sons.

Charles, Sir John's brilliant third son, worked for the East India Company in Macao and became a Freeman of Edinburgh in his mid-thirties. He became Liberal MP for Berwickshire in 1833 but died within the year. His statue atop a tall column commands a view of Coldstream to this day.

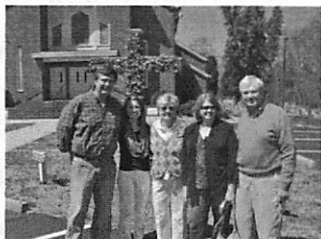
Sir John's youngest son David was a London stockbroker, who became Liberal MP for Berwickshire in 1859. In 1834, he changed his name to Robertson in order to secure his wife's inheritance and the estate at Ladykirk. In 1873, he was awarded a peerage and promptly took on the name Baron Marjoribanks. But a week later was knocked down by a horse and died. His only son predeceased him so the title became extinct.

William's two sons went to Oxford and Cambridge universities. The eldest, also named Sir John, married Charlotte Trotter in 1858 and fought unsuccessfully against his uncle David in the 1859 election. He became Magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant of Berwickshire and organised a clean water supply for Coldstream. He died childless in 1884 and the title passed to his brother William, who also died childless within four years. Lees then passed to a cousin, George Marjoribanks, partner and later chairman of Coutts Bank. Sir George (as he became) regarded Lees as a holiday home. In 1931, the entail was broken. On his death, Sir George left Lees to his daughter who promptly sold it to a gentleman only interested in it for the fishing. The house became derelict (it was once used for a fire exercise by the Coldstream fire brigade) until a member of the Douglas-Home family bought it and rebuilt what little could be rescued as a fine family home.

The full paper can be found on the web page [www.coldstreamhistorysociety.co.uk/index.php/coldstream-people/profile/the-marjoribanks-of-the-lees](http://www.coldstreamhistorysociety.co.uk/index.php/coldstream-people/profile/the-marjoribanks-of-the-lees).

## Snippets

In April 2013, Carol Leake, US Treasurer of the Clan Marjoribanks Society, entertained her Marchbanks kin, the Holley family, visiting Greenville, SC from Chattanooga, TN and Albany, GA. They toured the cemetery at Reedy River and the Marchbanks ancestral lands.



Helen Hester Porter, aged 74, died on February 3, 2013 in Greenville, South Carolina. She was a former teacher at Forest Lake Elementary School. Her husband Kenneth and two daughters survive her as well as her four grandchildren.

After living in Belgium for 40 years, Clan President Patricia Baillie Strong and her husband Stuart are moving to Edinburgh, Scotland in June 2013.



In October 2012, Katie Marjoribanks, the eldest daughter of the Chief and Engineering Director at Chiltern Railways, UK, announced her engagement to Glen Laishley. They plan to get married in September 2013.

Jonathan Sabarre from Australia recently joined the Society. His grandfather Robert Marjoribanks ("Bobby Banks") was a famous Australian international rugby player. Jonathan's great-grandfather emigrated from Kirkpatrick Juxta, Dumfriesshire, Scotland to Newcastle, NSW, Australia.

Alastair Marjoribanks, past President of the Clan Marjoribanks Society, aged 82, died on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2012. He was an organist at several churches in the Scottish Borders. He worked at several newspapers and was chairman of the Preserving Coldstream Association. His wife Marion, children and grandchildren survive him.

Alexander Marjoribanks, the Chief's nephew, is a Captain in the British army (due to become Major in July 2013) and at present is training troops in Canada. His wife Charlotte was a Major in the British army but resigned her commission in order to bring up their three sons.



Fiona Marjoribanks of that Ilk, the Chief's wife, was visited by her four granddaughters, Molly, Poppy, Anna and Flora in Greenock in July 2012.

## The Marjoribanks Letter

*The Marjoribanks Letter*, published by The Clan Marjoribanks Society free to members. Annual Membership fees were due on 1st January 2013 and are as follows:

| Annual Fees        | Individual     | Family  |
|--------------------|----------------|---------|
| The United Kingdom | £11.00         | £21.00  |
| The United States  | \$18.00 (U.S.) | \$35.00 |
| Canada             | \$26.00 (Can.) | \$47.00 |
| Australia          | \$22.00 (Aus.) | \$42.00 |
| New Zealand        | \$28.00 (N.Z.) | \$53.00 |

\* *Family membership includes parents and dependent children.*

If possible, we would prefer annual membership fees to be paid by standing order. Otherwise you can send annual membership fees by bank transfer, cheques or money orders made payable to The Clan Marjoribanks Society to either:

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18 Green Hill Drive  
Simpsonville SC 29681, U.S.A  
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If you have information of interest to other members of the clan, please get in touch. If you know of Marjoribankses, Marchbankses, Marshbankses or other - who would like to receive the Letter, please send their e-mails and postal addresses (in block capitals) to :

Caroline Morris,  
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The Marjoribanks Clan web page can be found at [www.marjoribanks.net](http://www.marjoribanks.net). The Marjoribanks DNA project can be found at [www.familytreedna.com/public/Marjoribanks](http://www.familytreedna.com/public/Marjoribanks).

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