



THE Marjoribanks LETTER

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

FIRST THREE-DAY GATHERING EXPLORES CANADA'S CAPITAL

The idea of a three-day Gathering proved a great success as forty members of The Family from Scotland, England, the United States and Canada met in Ottawa, the capital of Canada, from June 3 to June 5 under a warm sun and blue Canadian skies.

We assembled on Friday afternoon in the lobby of the Chateau Laurier, the elegant Norman-style hotel next-door to the Canadian Parliament buildings, to board the bus for Rideau Hall, residence of the Governor-General. Their excellencies were unable to greet us, since they were in Normandy attending the ceremonies marking the fiftieth anniversary of the D-Day landings, but we were very hospitably received and escorted through the 130-year-old house.

Among the solemn portraits of former Governor Generals on the Ballroom walls is the bearded visage of the seventh Earl and first Marquis of Aberdeen and Temair who occupied the post from 1893 to 1898 and who, among his other distinctions, had the great good fortune in 1877 to marry Ishbel Marjoribanks, the daughter of the first Baron Tweedmouth. We were accorded the privilege of visiting the Governor General's private quarters, not usually open to visitors, in order to see the large oil painting of Lady Aberdeen which hangs in one of the corridors.

On Saturday morning we walked from the Chateau down to the foot of the locks that link the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa River to board the motor vessel *Sea Prince* for a cruise which provided us with impressive views of the architecture of the city, both historic and modern. The *Sea Prince* also offered an opportunity to sample North American cuisine – in the form of hamburgers and hot dogs – as well as such universally recognized libations as gin-and-tonic and Scotch whisky.

In the afternoon we were back on the bus for a three-hour tour of the National Capital Region. A highlight of the tour was the church of Saint-Francois-des-Sales-de-Gatineau in the province of Québec. Lady Aberdeen had the misfortune in the Spring of 1896 to overturn her carriage not far from the church and she and the coachman and her aide-de-camp and a pair of horses were spilled into the river and might have drowned had not three of the parishioners gallantly pulled them out.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Chateau on Sunday morning, followed by a lunch featuring poached Canadian Atlantic salmon with lemon watercress sauce. While we were enjoying our coffee, we were treated to an illustrated talk by Ursula Surtees of Kelowna, British Columbia, director and curator of the



Fiona Marjoribanks, wife of the Chief, poses before the portrait of Ishbel Marjoribanks, Lady Aberdeen, in the private quarters of Rideau Hall where Lady Aberdeen presided as the wife of the Governor-General from 1893 to 1898.

Kelowna Museum. The museum has many exhibits reminiscent of Lord and Lady Aberdeen's days in the Okanagan Valley in the 1890s. Ursula's mother-in-law, Ishbel Surtees, was the daughter of Hon. Courts Marjoribanks, Lady Aberdeen's younger brother.

After lunch, people with a special interest in the family genealogy convened for a workshop. Members talked about sources of information in their local areas and ways of digging it out. Clyde Marchbanks of Beverly Hills, Michigan, who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, explained how to make use of the church's world-wide genealogical records.

At the end of the day, we strolled down Wellington Street in the sunshine, past the Parliament Buildings, to the National Press Club for drinks and good-byes.

Sir James Elected President

Sir James Alexander Milne Marjoribanks K.C.M.G. was elected president of The Marjoribanks Family at the annual general meeting held in Ottawa June 5, 1994.

Sir James, brother of the late chief, William Marjoribanks of that ilk, is a retired British diplomat. He entered the Foreign Service in 1934 and his first posting was to the British Embassy in Peking. In addition to important responsibilities in the Foreign Office, he represented his country in Hankow, Marseilles, Bucharest and Canberra. During World War II he was the British Consul in Jacksonville, Florida and later Vice Consul in New York. He was the first British Ambassador to the European Economic Community.

Sir James said, in his acceptance speech:

"I think, if one had to consider what has been the principal achievement of The Marjoribanks Family organization since it was constituted, it is indeed the way that we have been able to stretch hands across the sea to establish links between members of the family in the United Kingdom and on the North American continent and in other parts of the world. I think that is how we should go on."

William P. Jackson Jr. of McLean, Virginia, a distinguished lawyer, was elected vice-president, the first American citizen to become an officer of The Family. Mr. Jackson is a descendant of George Marjoribanks - known in the family as "George the Jacobite" - who was captured at the uprising against the English at Preston in 1715 and transported to Virginia the following year. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama and its law school, a senior partner in the transportation law firm of Jackson and Jessop, and a national past president of the Association of Transportation Practitioners.

Robert and Nancy Marjoribanks of Ottawa will continue to serve respectively as Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer.

Andrew Marjoribanks of that ilk, the hereditary chief of the family, after calling the meeting to order with the ringing of the Balbardic bell, extended a special welcome to members from the United States and Canada who were attending a meeting for the first time. He acknowledged particularly Elizabeth Marjoribanks Bair of New York, the widow of George Marjoribanks who was the elder brother of our late chief and head of the family from 1947 to 1955. The Chief also welcomed Russell Honey of Belleville, Ontario and his wife Marrie. Mr. Honey a former judge and member of the Canadian Parliament, was representing Clan Johnston/c in America with whom we have close historical associations.

The president, Roger Marjoribanks of Surrey, brought greetings from members whom he had recently visited in Australia: Jack and Doreen Marjoribanks of Cessnock, New South Wales, and their son John and Richard Marjoribanks of Busselton, Western Australia, and Richard's son, Dr. Roger Marjoribanks of Perth.

The report of the Honorary Treasurer showed a deficit of \$275.83 due to unanticipated expenditures connected with the 1993 annual meeting and for special research into family documents held by the Earl of Annandale. The meeting agreed to a proposal by the Honorary Secretary that annual fees, which had not been revised since they were established in 1990, be increased from \$10 to \$12 for individual members and, for families, from \$20 to \$22. An attempt would be made to reduce expenses by investigating new methods of printing *The Marjoribanks Letter*, if that could be done without impairing quality. Members would be reminded in future when their dues became payable.

Good Start For Research Fund

A Research Fund has been established to help cover the costs of exploring the family's history and origins.

Some members during the annual meeting offered to make special financial contributions, over and above their fees, to help offset the current deficit. It was suggested, however, that the The Family operations should continue to be funded by annual fees. Members wishing to make an additional financial contribution could pay their money into a Research Fund. The Fund will be administered by the Genealogical and Historical Committee and will be sustained entirely by voluntary donations. The Committee will entertain proposals from members for research projects that would be of general interest.

Before the end of the Gathering, contributions to the Research Fund had already amounted to \$150 Canadian. Further contributions should be sent to the Honorary Secretary.

The Electronic Highway

Some family members in the U.S. and Canada are communicating with each other on computers equipped with modems - devices that enable them to exchange electronic mail by way of Internet, the network that connects people and information sources throughout the world.

Here are some electronic mailing addresses, if you're equipped to use them:

William P. Jackson Jr., McLean, Virginia, Vice President:

translaw@DGSG.dgsys.com

Robert Marjoribanks, Ottawa, Honorary Secretary:

an770@freenet.carleton.ca

Robin S. Marjoribanks, Toronto:

marj@physics.utoronto.ca

Jerry C. Oldshuc Jr., Tuscaloosa AL:

TTBGI3A@Prodigy.com

There's even some talk of setting up a network of our own - to be called "the ilknet," of course!

Roger acknowledged with thanks the contribution of Dr. Angus Marchbanks of Bakersfield, California, and William P. Jackson Jr. of McLean, Virginia, for their contributions to the article on the Family in America which appears in the second issue of *The Marjoribanks Journal*. Work had begun on a third issue which would deal with the Lees branch of the family and possibly with the family in Canada.

Members reaffirmed the idea of meeting annually and agreed that the 1994 gathering would be held the first week-end in June near Henley-on-Thames at the Henley College of Business Management which, in the last century, was a family mansion called Greenlands, the home of Edward Marjoribanks, a partner in Coutts Bank and a brother of the first Lord Tweedmouth.

Members expressed their appreciation for Roger's "yeoman work" as president during the past two years. His services will continue to be available as a member of the Executive Committee and as chairman of the Genealogical and Historical Committee.

Before adjourning the meeting, Roger asked everyone present to take a moment to remember our late chief, William Marjoribanks of that ilk, "a dear man to whom we all owe so much."

LADY ISHBEL GOES FOR A SWIM

April 22, 1896, was a fine spring day but the streets of Ottawa were there too muddy and wet for walking. In the afternoon, Ishbel Marjoribanks, Countess of Aberdeen, decided she would go for a drive in her carriage.

John Keddie, the groom, hitched her beautiful chestnut ponies, Cowslip and Buttercup, to a light carriage and, with Capt. John Sinclair, the Governor General's secretary, as an escort, they crossed the Ottawa River on the ferry and began to drive along the banks of the Gatineau where it skirts the village of Pointe Gatineau.

"Not at all pleasant"

Ishbel, as usual, insisted on taking the reins, even though the Gatineau was in full flood and in some places was over-running its banks and inundating the road. Suddenly a carriage wheel hit a hole in the road and the carriage, horses, and all three passengers tumbled into the ice-cold river.

"Before we knew where we were, the ponies had disappeared into the river and the carriage, half-overturned, followed and the waters closed over them," Lady Aberdeen wrote in her journal. "I found myself on my back in the water. Boy [Capt. Sinclair] was looking over me for a moment and smiled and said, 'It's all right.'" I tried to smile back again and then, remembering that I had been told one ought to float in such emergencies, I stretched out my feet."

In spite of her efforts to float, her heavy winter clothing was pulling her down.

"My head got under water which was not at all pleasant. I began to wonder how long one would could remain conscious. My poor lovely ponies, gone for a quick death."

Captain Sinclair grabbed Lady Aberdeen with one arm and, with the other, began swimming towards shallower water. Keddie, the groom had managed to climb on top of the carriage. Three villagers – Charles Carrière, Benoni Tremblay and Felix Bigras – then rowed out and took all three to shore.

"Poor Al!"

Lady Aberdeen went to the nearby church of Saint-François-des-Sales and asked the curé, père Champagne, to telephone the Governor General and let him know that they were well. They

crossed the Ottawa River again in a small boat, landing at Rockcliffe, from where they walked a short distance to Rideau Hall.

Of Lord Aberdeen's reaction, Ishbel wrote in her journal: "Poor A. He was in a state!"

After a hot bath and a change of clothes, however, Ishbel was ready to resume her duties and that evening they entertained at dinner Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a favourite of the Aberdeens, soon to be prime minister, and after dinner received senators and members of Parliament who would be returning home the next day after Parliament prorogued. Ishbel's adventure was almost the sole topic of conversation.

"Agreeably astonished."

When Lady Aberdeen entered the Senate chamber the next day to take part with her husband in the closing ceremonies, she was greeted with loud and sustained applause.

"Her Excellency was agreeably astonished at the ovation," reported the Ottawa Citizen.

Lord Aberdeen was anxious to show his gratitude to the people of Pointe Gatineau for the rescue of his wife. When he discovered that père Champagne had been trying unsuccessfully for more than a decade to obtain a new bell for his church, he ordered one, weighing 1,464 pounds, from the London foundry of Mears & Stamback and presented it to the curé at an impressive ceremony a year later. It was inscribed:

GRATIAS DOMINO
ABERDEEN
ISHBEL ABERDEEN
JOHN SINCLAIR
27th April, 1896

Their excellencies with their entourage and seven members of the Cabinet, including the prime minister, crossed to Pointe Gatineau for the occasion on board the steamship Mansfield. The entrance to the church was decorated with a triumphal arch and thirteen members of the clergy took part in the benediction while two thousand of the faithful from Pointe Gatineau and Ottawa looked on.

Queen Victoria Marshbanks

While Scots called their children William, Thomas, Robert, George and James, American members of the family in the last century gave their offspring more inspiring names.

There was at least one Columbus Marchbanks, an Andrew Jackson Marchbanks, a Benjamin Franklin Marchbanks and two named George Washington Marshbanks. One lady shone in the reflected light of a royal namesake: Queen Victoria Marshbanks.

One North Carolinian, however, laboured under the nickname "Buncombe" Marshbanks, not because he was given to spouting empty oratory, claptrap or humbug – the usual dictionary definition of buncombe – but just because he lived at the Forks of Ivy in Buncombe County N.C.

The word buncombe – later spelled bunkum and then shortened to bunk – won an enduring place in the English language, thanks to U.S. Congressman Felix Walker who represented Buncombe County. During an important debate in 1820, Mr. Walker was holding up proceedings with a long, wearisome speech

about the virtuous inhabitants and the enviable amenities of his home district. When his colleagues begged him to sit down and allow a vote to be taken, he apologized and said, "I have to do it for Buncombe." Within a few years the expression, "speaking for Buncombe" came to mean irrelevant political oratory intended solely to ingratiate the speaker with the folks back home, and eventually any sort of rhetorical rubbish.

That's a little bit of history. But, as Henry Ford said, "History is bunk!"

Robert Marchbank

Robert Marchbank of New Annan, Prince Edward Island, who was descended from a James Marchbank who emigrated from Annan in Dumfriesshire about 1825, died of a heart ailment in January. In 1991 Robert reported that he had discovered an old family bible which made reference to a Marchbank family which occupied land near Moffat in Dumfriesshire as early as 1719.

Dinner With Dickens

Guess who came to dinner . . . Charles Dickens!

The famous Victorian author was a great friend of Angela Burdett Courts who, in the 1830s, was said to be the richest woman in Britain. Her grandfather, and the source of her fortune, was Thomas Coutts, one of the founders of Coutts Bank. A partner in the bank was his cousin Edward Marjoribanks (1814-1879), a younger brother of the first Baron Tweedmouth.

Angela and Dickens were close friends and worked together among the London poor. Dickens identified people and institutions in need of help and Angela put up the money. They met when Edward Marjoribanks, perhaps recognizing their shared interests, invited them both to dinner.

Dickens recalled the incident later in a letter to Angela:

"I have never begun a book or begun anything of interest to me or done anything of importance to me, but it was on a Friday . . . it must have been on a Friday that I first dined with you at Marjoribanks."

Ladies' Silver Brooches

We've been looking for a number of years for a way to obtain ladies' silver brooches in the form of the family badge. Now a source has been found in British Columbia.

William Marjoribanks of Armstrong B.C. found a silversmith in Armstrong who was prepared to produce them in quantity in sterling silver for \$75 Canadian each. The design is similar to the badge displayed on the front of *The Marjoribanks Letter*. If you would like to have one, please write to William directly at:

R.R.1, C33 Dunkley Drive
Armstrong B.C. V0E 1B0
Canada.

Genealogy Chart

Roger Marjoribanks of Surrey has commissioned a chart illustrating the genealogy of the senior line, the chief's own family, and of the junior line, Marjoribanks of Lees.

It is professionally produced and includes more than a hundred and fifty names from Philip Marjoribanks of that Ilk, who died in 1503, to Kirsty Marjoribanks, who is seventeen and the chief's youngest daughter. It is decorated with the coats of arms of Marjoribanks of that Ilk and Marjoribanks of Lees.

Roger can arrange to have copies made. A version in colour and on heavy stock, would cost the equivalent of £35, including postage. Another version, in black and white and on lighter stock, would cost £15.

Inquiries should be addressed directly to Roger at:

104 Gosden Hill Road
Guildford, Surrey GU4 7JB
England.

Notes from the Secretary

Mark your calendar now with the dates of the 1995 Gathering and Annual General Meeting - Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 3rd, 4th and 5th. We will be meeting at the Henley College of Business which was once a Marjoribanks mansion, near Henley-on-Thames. I'll be sending you details as they are arranged.

* * *

If your membership is expiring, please remember that fees have been raised from £10 to £12, for individual members, and from £20 to £22 for families. An estimate of the equivalent amounts in other currencies is shown in the box below. To make sure your membership is up to date, check the date on the bottom-right corner of your card.

* * *

Copies of *The Marjoribanks Journal* Nos. 1 and 2 are still available at \$5.00 (Canadian) or the equivalent in other funds. Issue No.1 deals with the origins of the family and with some distinguished members who lived in Edinburgh in the 16th century. Issue No. 2 includes articles on the senior line of the family, the family in the parish of Eccles in Berwickshire, and some historical notes on the family in America. Back issues of *The Marjoribanks Letter* are also available at \$3.00 (Canadian). Please specify the issue you would like. Eight issues have been published: in 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 (February and August), 1991, 1992 and 1993.

And I still have a few family ties. They're polyester with a red and gold stripe and the family badge in gold and silver, on a black background. Price £7.00 or equivalent.

I'm always happy to hear your news and to answer your questions.

Please drop me a line!

Robert Marjoribanks
Honorary Secretary

The Marjoribanks Letter

The Marjoribanks Letter is published by The Marjoribanks Family and is distributed without charge to members.

Annual Fees:	Individual	Family*
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<i>If you prefer, fees may be paid in local currencies at the following rates:</i>		
The United States	\$18.00 (U.S.)	\$34.00
Canada	\$26.00 (Can)	\$47.00
Australia	\$25.00 (Aus)	\$45.00
New Zealand	\$30.00 (NZ)	\$55.00

* Family membership includes parents and their children.

Please address applications for membership, payments of fees, editorial contributions and other correspondence to:

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