



# THE Marjoribanks LETTER

PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF THE MARJORIBANKS FAMILY, NO. 7 DECEMBER, 1992

## ROGER RINGS THE BELL!

Roger Marjoribanks of Guildford in Surrey, a teacher of history and a keen amateur genealogist, was elected president of The Marjoribanks Family at the 1992 annual general meeting held near Coldstream on Sunday August 16.

Sir James Marjoribanks of Edinburgh, a retired British diplomat, was elected vice president. Robert and Nancy Marjoribanks of Ottawa were re-elected Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, respectively.

Andrew Marjoribanks of that Ilk, who became chief on the death of his father in December, 1991, becomes honorary head of the family organization.

The meeting began with a silent tribute to the memory of the late chief, William Marjoribanks of that Ilk. Andrew spoke briefly about his father's devotion to members of the family in all parts of the world and his satisfaction in seeing the bonds among them grow stronger.

"To keep this organization growing in the way it started would be the greatest tribute we could pay to my father," he said.

### Financial Report

Robert Marjoribanks of Ottawa, the Honorary Secretary, reported that The Family continues in sound financial condition. Expenditures for the twelve months ending May 31, 1992, amounted to just under \$1,000 (in Canadian dollars), mainly for printing and mailing *The Marjoribanks Letter*, distributing notices of the meeting, and maintaining correspondence with members in various parts of the world. Income, including the balance brought forward from the previous year, was just under \$1,400. There was a balance in the accounts of \$523.62.

### Correspondence

Robert reported that correspondence with members was growing. Many were writing to ask for information about their grandparents who had left Scotland for Australia or North America in the 19th century. With the help of Roger Marjoribanks of Surrey and Douglas Marchbanks of Edinburgh it was sometimes possible to fill in blanks in their family tree and to add to the general knowledge of Marjoribanks genealogy.

Leslie Yung Kong Park Marjoribanks of Kuching, Sarawak, had written to express his pleasure at being involved in The Family and had offered to provide an account of the Kuching Marjoribanks and particularly of his father who was a medical officer in the service of the last of the White Rajahs of Sarawak.

### The Marjoribanks Journal

Roger, who is a member of the Historical and Genealogical Committee, displayed the first issue of The Marjoribanks Journal: Essays on the History and Genealogy of The Family. The new periodical is intended to satisfy the interest of people who would like to study the family history and genealogy in more detail than can be published in The Marjoribanks Letter. The first issue contains, in addition to a general introduction,

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## William Marjoribanks of that Ilk

*William Logan Marjoribanks of that Ilk died quietly in Turriff, Aberdeenshire, on December 1, 1991, after a lengthy illness, in his eighty-second year. This brief account of his career was prepared by his younger brother, Sir James Marjoribanks K.C.M.G. of Edinburgh.*

My dear brother Will and I were almost the same age and inevitably were thrown much together in nursery days, at school and afterwards at university.

I always had a great respect for my elder brother. He had a very detailed scientific mind and an outstanding capacity for intricate work in a variety of disciplines, mainly but not exclusively involving outdoor activity.

After graduating at the University of Edinburgh's forestry school, he joined the Sudan Civil Service, travelling extensively and, with the help of his loving wife, the former Thelma Williamson whom he married in 1938, surmounting successfully the hardships associated with that rigorous climate. He finally became a very young Chief Conservator of Forests, a key role

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Members of the Family gather for a photograph at the foot of the monument to Charles Marjoribanks in Coldstream.

Roger (continued from page 1)

two articles: "The Name and Family: Origins and Early Years" and "The Family in Sixteenth Century Edinburgh." Copies are available from the Honorary Secretary at £2.50 sterling or \$5.00 in Canadian or U.S. currency.

It was agreed that the 1993 Family Gathering and Annual General Meeting would be held in Dumfriesshire on Sunday, May 30, to coincide with ROOTS '93, a series of celebrations involving all of the Dumfriesshire clans and the principal families, including the Marjoribankses.

Roger, acknowledging his election as president, said he was "honoured, as a member of the junior [Lees] branch," to take the post and looked forward to the possibility of holding an Annual Gathering in North America within the next few years. He concluded by saying, "It is with childish glee that I now do what I have long wished - to ring The Marjoribanks Bell!"

The meeting was attended by forty members from Scotland, England, Canada, the United States, and Belgium. They assembled at the Tillmouth Park Hotel in the village of Cornhill-upon-Tweed. The century-old hotel was once a country house and is set in a 1,000-acre estate which offers excellent salmon-fishing and grouse-shooting.

After lunch they visited the monument erected in Coldstream to honour Charles Marjoribanks, Member of Parliament for Berwick, for his contribution to the passing of the Reform Act of 1832. Members also visited the nearby church at Ladykirk which contains several memorials to the Right Honourable David Robertson, Baron Marjoribanks, the younger brother of Charles, who changed his name to Robertson at the time of his marriage. David was also the Member of Parliament for Berwick, was appointed Lord Lieutenant of the County in 1860, and was created a peer of the United Kingdom shortly before his death in 1873.

The Marjoribanks family, among its more notable historical distinctions, is credited with the creation of one of the world's most talented and admired gun dogs, the Golden Retriever.

The man responsible for developing the breed was Sir Dudley Coufts Marjoribanks, later Baron Tweedmouth, the son of Edward Marjoribanks, the partner in Coufts Bank.

Until about 1952, a fanciful tale was told about the origin of the breed. According to the story, Sir Dudley visited a Russian circus that was appearing at the seaside resort of Brighton in 1858. He was so impressed with the performance of a troupe of Russian sheepdogs that he offered to buy a pair. The owner, however, was reluctant to break up his act by selling just a pair, so he bought the whole troupe and took them home to his deer-forest estate, Guisachan (Gaelic for "Place of the Firs") in Inverness-shire, and crossed them with local dogs to create the Golden Retriever.

Unfortunately, the story is not true. Sir Dudley's breeding records from 1835 to 1890, which were uncovered in 1952, make no mention of the Russian circus dogs. Sir Dudley, in fact, developed the Golden Retriever by crossing a yellow Retriever named Nous with a yellow-coloured Tweed Water-Spaniel named Belle which he obtained from David Robertson, Baron Marjoribanks, of Ladykirk. The first litter of four pups was born in 1868 and named Crocus, Primrose, Cowslip and Ada. They were then crossed with the Red Setter and sandy-coloured Bloodhounds to found the Golden Retriever line.

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Chief (Continued from page 1)

when timber supplies were so vital to the prosecution of the Second World War.

On leaving the Sudan, an ideal job awaited him when he was appointed representative of the National Trust, the custodian of historic properties, in the north-east of Scotland. The Trust had suffered a disastrous loss in the gales of 1953 which had flattened wide areas of timber throughout the north-east. My brother set about the task of rebuilding these forests and, at the same time, took charge of the administration of a variety of properties, including some ancient castles, all of which were of special historical interest.

Pitmedden, with its Great Garden, about twelve miles north of Aberdeen, occupied his talents for more than eighteen years until he and Thelma finally settled in their own enchanting old manse, which they called Kirklands of Forglan, on the banks of the Deveron, near Turriff. It was quite breath-taking the energy he expended on his trees and the walled garden at Forglan. He dammed a stream to make a pond in a steep-sided gully which he called "the den" and which became a favourite haunt of his grandchildren and a place for meditation in his quiet moments.

"Come, James," he would say to me, "let's rend an oak!" His strength in tackling the job was quite incredible, and the wealth of neatly stacked timber which still feeds Thelma's fire, testifies to this day to the skills and stamina of the master forester.

He was at heart a truly modest man whose kindly nature endeared him to young and old alike. In his opening speech to the first Family Gathering in Edinburgh in 1989, he said: "I will strive, for the few years left to me, to keep in touch with members of our family, and especially the old, to let them know that someone cares about them, and that they will not be forgotten."

He will be gratefully remembered as the worthy founder of "The Marjoribanks Family."

## A LIFE OF SERVICE, AT HOME AND ABROAD

Charles Marjoribanks, who stands atop a column dominating the skyline of Coldstream, was born at Eccles in 1749, the third son of Capt. John Marjoribanks who was later to become Lord Provost (mayor, in North America) of Edinburgh and was later created a baronet.

Before members attending the Annual Meeting went to see the monument, Roger Marjoribanks – who is a collateral descendant – gave them a brief account of Charles' life.

### *"Intelligent but idle"*

Charles describes himself in his unpublished memoirs as "intelligent but idle," a judgment not entirely supported by his life and career.

"He was something of a fish out of water," Roger said. "He did not get on well with his father who was of a more robust personality, nor with his elder brother Edward who died in India in 1833, a victim of the rigours of the colonial service"

Charles attended Edinburgh's top grammar school and, upon graduation, was offered an opening in the East India Company by his uncle Campbell, a member of the Company's board of directors. He passed the entrance college course easily and, at the age of 19, after an ocean voyage which he says was given over to "amorous dalliance," arrived in Macao in Southeast China, forty miles west of Hong Kong, to take up a position as a junior writer.

In his memoirs, he dismisses as a matter of little importance his service in Macao, the Company's chief point of contact with the lucrative China trade, especially in opium. He describes his life in the Company's service as one of indolence and self-indulgence but the Company records tell a very different story.

### *Sailing Health*

Unlike most Britons serving abroad at the time, he took the trouble to study Chinese and progressed smoothly through the ranks to become, in 1825, local Secretary to the Company. Soon after, however, he was obliged to return to England on leave, because of failing health.

He was at this time courted by Harriet Coutts, the wealthy widow of Thomas Coutts of Coutts Bank in which his uncle, Edward Marjoribanks, was at one time a senior partner. Charles, however, decided he could not marry for money a woman he didn't love. Harriet later married the Duke of St. Albans.

In 1827 he returned to China and became president of the Company's China Committee in which position he enjoyed a brilliant success. His poor health continued to plague him, however, and he was invalided home in 1832.

He was immediately invited to stand for election to Parliament in the election which returned the Liberals to power and forced the House of Lords to accept the Reform Bill of 1832, which enfranchised thousands of Britons who had been prevented from voting through archaic electoral laws. He died the following year, before he could add to his laurels.

The inscription at the foot of his monument reads:

*Erected by the numerous friends of Charles Marjoribanks, M.P. for the county of Berwick, 3rd son of Sir John Marjoribanks Bart. of Lees, to perpetuate their admiration of his high qualities and political principles and to commemorate the triumphant victory obtained by the Independent and Liberal electors of Berwickshire, A.D. 1832.*

## Marchbank to the Rescue!

Mary Roberts of Rocky River, Ohio, whose great-grandmother was Mary Marchbanks of St. Kirkpatrick-Juxta Parish in Dumfriesshire, sends an article from the Scots Magazine about a tragic adventure that took place in the winter of 1831 and involved one of our kinsmen.

On Tuesday, February 1 of that year John Goodfellow, a coach driver, and his guard, James MacGeorge, arrived from Dumfries at the Spur Inn at Moffat at two o'clock in the morning in a heavy blizzard. They had two lady passengers for the next stage of their route, up the steep seven miles, past the Devil's Beef Tub, the 600-foot-deep hollow where the old reivers used to hide their stolen cattle, to the inn at Tweedshaws.

The landlord of the Spur urged them to stop for the night but neither the coachmen nor their passengers would agree. Two more horses were added to their four-horse team for the climb up to the Beef Tub and James Marchbank, a Moffat road-mender, volunteered to go along and lend a hand.

After two hours the blizzard was worse and the coach was completely snowbound. James Marchbank tried once more to persuade Goodfellow and MacGeorge to abandon their journey for the night. When they refused, he unhitched four of the horses and took them back to Moffat for help. He returned a few hours later in a carriage and took the two lady passengers back to the inn.

In the meantime, Goodfellow and MacGeorge had each taken one of the remaining horses and a fifty-pound leather bag of mail and headed on, without lanterns, through the storm towards Tweedshaws, five miles away. Three miles farther on, they abandoned the horses and continued on foot.

### *Search Party*

When the riderless horses returned the following day, James Marchbank set out alone to look for the missing men and, after climbing to the top of the Devil's Beef Tub, he found the mail bags tied to a post within a mile of Tweedshaws. By nightfall there was still no sign of Goodfellow or MacGeorge and Marchbank was forced to go back to Moffat. A search party was organized and three days later their bodies were found buried in the deep snow.

A cairn was later erected to the memory of James MacGeorge and John Goodfellow who died in a vain attempt to deliver the mail. There is no memorial to James Marchbank who saved the lives of the lady passengers and whose sensible advice, if it had been followed, would have averted a tragedy.

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## Bill Jackson Honoured

William P. Jackson Jr. of McLean, Virginia, a descendant of George Marjoribanks who fought in the Scottish cause and was captured and transported to Virginia in 1716, was recently honoured by being elected president of the American Association of Transport Practitioners.

Members are mainly lawyers who represent railroad, trucking and steamship companies and practise before the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission.

United States Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama, paying tribute to his long-time friend and law-school classmate, described for the Association's annual meeting Bill's academic and professional career and his military service and acknowledged his "immense accomplishments" in working with members of the U.S. Senate.

## LOCHMABEN CHURCH HAS FAMILY CONNECTIONS

A few miles west of Lockerbie, the site of our 1993 Annual Gathering, is the village of Lochmaben where Rev. Thomas Marjoribanks of that ilk served as the parish minister from 1834 to 1849.

Thomas was the seventeenth or eighteenth son of Alexander Marjoribanks of that ilk, the auld laird of Balbardie, and was the great-great-grandfather of our Chief. Two of his sons – George and Thomas – and a grandson, also named Thomas, followed him in the church.

### *The Disruption*

He was obliged to leave the Lochmaben church when, at the time of The Disruption, in opposition to his parishioners, he chose to remain with the established church rather than take part in the new movement that created the Free Kirk. He continued his ministry at the church in Stenton in East Lothian.

Thomas and his wife, the former Mary Cook, had six children. A daughter, Diana, who died at the age of two years and four months, is buried in Lochmaben Old Kirk Yard.

A photograph of Thomas, taken about 1849, can be seen in the Lochmaben Session House, and must be one of the earliest examples of the photographer's art.

Oddly enough, Thomas's name is spelled consistently in the church records as Marjoribanks.

Dr. John Wilson who has written a history of the churches of Lochmaben says the first church in the village was founded by Robert the Bruce in the middle of the 12th century and was probably rebuilt several times in the next five hundred years. It was burned in 1593 by a party of Johnstones who had trapped a band of fleeing Maxwells inside. The present building was completed in 1820.

A new manse was built in 1840, on the site of several earlier buildings, and was first occupied by Rev. Thomas Marjoribanks and his family. It ceased to be the parish manse in 1955 after the Union of the Churches and is now known as Magdalene House and is occupied by the McKerrell of Hillhouse and Madam Hillhouse.

Robert Burns is said to have spent a night at the Lochmaben manse in 1789 and, during his visit, wrote the poem, "The Blue Eyed Lass," in honour of the fifteen-year-old daughter of the minister, Rev. Andrew Jaffray.

## "The Marjoribanks Temper"

If you are ever accused of being bad tempered, you can blame it on heredity.

The authority for that defence is Professor J.T. Saywell, a Canadian historian and author of *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen*.

Isobel Marjoribanks, wife of the Earl of Aberdeen, Governor General of Canada from 1893 to 1898, was, according to Prof. Saywell: "intense, passionate, confident and aggressive, learning only with great difficulty to control the Marjoribanks temper..."

Prof. Saywell no doubt had historical evidence to support this assessment of the family character but, if further examples are required, there are no doubt many spouses who are prepared to provide them.

## Lockerbie

The 1993 Family Gathering and Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 30th beginning at 10:00 A.M. at the Lockerbie Manor Country Hotel, Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. DG11 2RG

## Notes from the Secretary

Copies of the first issue of The Marjoribanks Journal: Essays on the History and Genealogy of The Family are now available from the Secretary at £2.50 in sterling or 85.00 in Canadian or U.S. funds. The first issue includes articles on the family origins and on notable Marjoribankses living in Edinburgh in the 16th century.

There are still some family ties available. They are polyester, striped in red and gold, on a black background, with the family badge in silver and gold. Prices in local currencies are: U.K. £7.00; U.S. \$12.50; Canada, \$14.00; Australia, \$16.00; New Zealand, \$21.00.

Back issues of The Marjoribanks Letter may be ordered at \$3.00 in Canadian funds or the equivalent in local currencies: #1 March, 1987; #2 March, 1988; #3 March, 1989; #4, February, 1990; #5 August, 1990; #6 October, 1991.

All items offered are priced at cost plus postage. Cheques or money orders should be made out to The Marjoribanks Family and mailed to the Secretary.

- > Please keep in touch. Let us know if you're changing your address.
- > Tell us about anyone you know who might like to get The Marjoribanks Letter.
- > Is your membership up to date? Please check the date on the bottom-right corner of your membership card.

A Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year to our family and friends throughout the world!

Robert Marjoribanks  
Honorary Secretary

## The Marjoribanks Letter

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

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New Zealand	\$30.00 (NZ)	\$60.00

\* Family membership includes parents and their children.

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