



THE Marjoribanks LETTER

PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF THE MARJORIBANKS FAMILY. NO. 6 OCTOBER, 1991

BATHGATE PROCESSION HONOURS THE AULD LAIRD OF BALBARDIE

Members of The Family had front-row seats at the 1991 annual Bathgate celebrations honouring the town's two heroes — John Newland, founder of the Bathgate Academy, and Alexander Marjoribanks of Balbardie and of that Ilk, who risked his personal fortune to ensure the school was built.

The Marjoribanks Annual General Meeting and Family Gathering was held in Bathgate on June 1, to coincide with the observances which included a pageant celebrating the marriage of Walter Stewart and Lady Marjorie Bruce, who gave the family its name, and a huge procession in which most of the town's children took part.

Students of the Academy acted the roles of Lady Marjorie, Walter Stewart, King Robert the Bruce, and their courtiers and attendants. The royal couple presided over the celebrations and all the attending dignitaries were formally presented to them, with curtsies and bows, on the steps of the Academy.

A Good Fight

Mr. Newland, a sugar planter, left a large part of his fortune to found a free school in his native Bathgate but the bequest was opposed by some of Mr. Newland's heirs.

Alexander Marjoribanks, who was the great-great-grandfather of William Marjoribanks of that Ilk, mortgaged his property to finance the legal proceedings which eventually ensured that the school would be built. Large banners honouring Mr. Newland and Alexander Marjoribanks were displayed in the procession. Mr. Marjoribanks' banner carried his portrait and the legend: "He Fought A Good Fight for Bathgate's Rights."

Schoolchildren in costume, some of them scarcely old enough to walk, representing dozens of different clubs and organizations, paraded through the streets, accompanied by decorated floats and more than a dozen bands playing pipes, flutes, brass instruments and, in once case, accordions.

Membership Growing

After the procession had passed, 28 members of The Family gathered at the Kaim Park Hotel for lunch and the Annual General Meeting. They were welcomed by The Chief who invited his son, Andrew Marjoribanks, Younger of that Ilk, to sound the Balbardie Bell and bring the meeting to order.

The Honorary Secretary, Robert Marjoribanks of Ottawa, reported that membership was growing at a good rate. There were now 83 paid-up members in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, with scattered members in other parts of the world.

Finances were in a healthy state and members' fees were sufficient to cover expenses, including the publishing and distribution of *The Marjoribanks Letter* and the cost of correspondence with members. There was a balance of some \$760.00 (Canadian) in the accounts, due largely to voluntary contributions by members of The Family over and above membership fees.



Alexander Marjoribanks of that Ilk, "the auld laird of Balbardie," is honoured each year in the Bathgate Procession for his part in saving the Bathgate Academy for the children of the town. His banner proclaims that he "fought a good fight."

Next Year in Coldstream?

There was some discussion of the idea of holding general meetings every some year, rather than every year, and the matter was left for the Council to consider. The Council was also asked to look into the possibility of holding a general meeting in 1991 at Coldstream, which has many important family connections, especially for the Lees branch.

Roger Marjoribanks of Guildford, Surrey, vice-president and a member of the Genealogical and Historical Committee, recommended that research should be focussed now on members of the family who remained in Dumfriesshire after the main branch moved to Balbardie.

Roger agreed to discuss with the Honorary Secretary the possibility of publishing a journal of genealogical and historical research, with contributions from members who are active in these fields.

It was agreed that, in order to allow the Council to continue its organizational work, the incumbent members should be re-elected for another year.

continued on page 2

OLD FAMILY BIBLE LISTS 'MARCHBANK OF MARCHBANK'

A family Bible, discovered in a Canadian second-hand shop, has raised some interesting questions about early members of the family.

An elderly gentleman, browsing in the Vancouver shop, noticed that the old book had many references to a family named Marchbank. He thought of his cousin's wife, Mrs. Marjorie Cairns, who lives on Prince Edward Island and was a Marchbank before her marriage, so he bought the book and sent it to her.

Robert Marchbank, her nephew, who farms at New Annan P.E.I., has sent a description of the book and its contents.

He says it was printed by Joast Broerz in Amsterdam in 1643.

There is a hand-written list of all those who have been in possession of it, "attested" by a Wm. Marchbank on July 30, 1898, in Boston.

The first person on the list is described as "William Marchbank of Marchbank, in or before 1719."

The others are: John Jackson, a relation, 1729; Wm. Marchbank of Moffat, in or before 1808; George Marchbank of Moffat, latterly of Glasgow, 1817; Wm. Marchbank of Glasgow, latterly of Boston, 1878.

According to an inscription, the Bible was presented by William Marchbank of Boston in 1898 to his daughter, Lizzie Heggie Marchbank Dumma.

Also inscribed are the names of Lizzie's mother, Sarah Jo Blair Marchbank, born 1848, died 1895; her grandmother, Lizzie Heggie Blair, born 1812, wife of James Blair; and her great-grandfather, James Heggie of Kirkcaldy, Scotland.

There is a drawing and a written description of a coat of arms which consists of a silver cushion, between two stars or spur rowels, on a red field. The crest is a lion's paw, holding a spear.

(Roger Marjoribanks of Guildford, a member of the Genealogical and Historical Committee, says that these are the arms displayed in the 17th century by Marjoribanks of Leuchie, antecedents of the Lees branch of the family.)

There are some notes describing the origin of the Marjoribanks family and their relationship to the Johnstones, which seem to have been copied from a genealogical text, but no explanation of a connection between the Marjoribanks and the "William Marchbank of Marchbank" of 1719.

Robert Marchbank of New Annan, on Prince Edward Island, whose aunt now has the Bible, traces his descent from a James Marchbank who, along with other settlers from Annan in Dumfriesshire went first to New Brunswick and then to Prince Edward Island, about 1825, naming their settlement New Annan.

He farmed in New Annan, shipped grain to England, and was lost at sea. James Marchbank and his wife, the former Mary Walker, had nine children, whose descendants are now spread throughout Canada and the U.S. and as far away as Australia.

continued from page 1

After the meeting, members made a sight-seeing tour of the area, including Torphichen Preceptory, which was occupied in the 12th century by a community of the Knights Hospitallers of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and Cairnpapple Hill, a prehistoric burying ground which affords spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. The day ended with a farewell reception at the hotel.

Imprisoned in the Tower

Dr. Andrew MacL. eish who gave the oration in honour of the memory of John Newland, reminded his audience of some interesting details in the life of Lady Marjorie and her husband, Walter FitzAlan, Sixth High Steward of Scotland.

It is perhaps not widely known that Lady Marjorie Bruce, as a girl of 11, was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Lady Marjorie and her mother, Queen Elizabeth, were captured by the English in 1306. The Queen was held under house arrest but young Marjorie was imprisoned for a time in the Tower before being released into the custody of Henry Percy.

The ladies were freed eight years later, in exchange for an English prisoner of the Scots, and Walter had the honour of receiving them on their return to Scotland.

Walter, was highly regarded by the king. Along with James Douglas, he was entrusted with the king's third division at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and was knighted just before the battle began. He served the king faithfully and capably as a soldier all his life.

Walter and Marjorie were married in 1315 but the marriage was unfortunately short and ended in tragedy. Lady Marjorie died at Paisley on March 2, 1316 at the age of 21.

While heavily pregnant, she broke her neck in a fall from her horse. Her son, who later became King Robert II, was delivered from her dead body by Caesarean section. Walter died at his castle at Bathgate 10 years later, at the age of 34.

A Rebel Leader

A reader has sent some pages from a book that describes a Marjoribanks who was the leader of a miners' rebellion in Australia in 1853.

Mr. Geoffrey Blainey in his book, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining*, published by Melbourne University Press, describes the anger experienced by tradesmen in the goldfields of New South Wales at the imposition of a licence fee of 30 shillings a month.

In the Turon Valley, 400 miles north of Ballarat tempers reached a peak.

"Men bought powder and cast shot from lead, and orators uttered sedition," Mr. Blainey writes. "The leader of the rebels was Mr. E. Marjoribanks, an Englishman of good blood, groggy breath and violent tongue."

The fact is that Erskine Marjoribanks was unquestionably of good blood. He may very well have had recourse to strong drink and extravagant language when provoked by injustice.

But an Englishman he never was!

He was the son of Alexander Marjoribanks, the auld laird of Balbardie, the youngest of 19 children, and emigrated to Australia as a youth. He died in 1871 at the age of 59.

The Turon valley miners were eventually subdued with a show of military force but the licence fee was later reduced from 30 shillings a month to ten.

A Skirt?

Before attending the recent Family gathering in Bathgate, one of our kinsmen sent his kilt to the cleaners.

He was chagrined, on recovering it, to get a bill for cleaning and pressing "one skirt, 35 pleats"!

MAJOR JOHN MARJORIBANKS HERO OF EUTAW SPRINGS

Rev. Dr. Thomas Marjoribanks, the father of our Chief, mentions in his family history the death of Major John Marjoribanks of the 19th Regiment of Foot at the Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina, during the Revolutionary War.

Major Marjoribanks died of his wounds shortly after the battle and was buried by kindly Americans. (*The Marjoribanks Letter* No.3, March 1989.)

Dr. Thomas M. Davis of South Carolina has since sent a more detailed report on Major Marjoribanks' death and the heroic part he played in the battle.

"Eutaw Springs was the last major battle in the war in South Carolina," he writes. "Major Marjoribanks was considered the real hero because he turned the tide of battle against the Americans even though he was fatally wounded."

He sends an account of the battle published in an historical journal. Major Marjoribanks was part of a force of some 2,300 men, under the command of Lt. Col. Andrew Stewart of the 3rd Fused Kent Regiment, which was encamped around a two-story brick house in a clearing near Eutaw Springs.

Two American deserters arrived in the camp on September 8, 1871, with the news that a strong American force was nearby and preparing to attack. A British party sent out to reconnoitre encountered the advancing Americans and were driven back.

Marjoribanks Holds

Col. Stewart on the British left flank was forced to retreat but Marjoribanks and his troops held their line. The Americans, advancing in pursuit of Col. Stewart, suddenly came upon the stores which the retreating British had abandoned. Tired and hungry they were overcome by their appetites and stopped to feast on the British rations, washed down by large quantities of rum.

Col. Stewart, sizing up the situation, reformed his men and set upon the distracted Americans and drove them back to join Major Marjoribanks who was now severely wounded and entrenched with his men behind a garden fence.

The American commander, denied his victory, withdrew his troops to fight another day and Major Marjoribanks is given the principal credit for standing him off.

Col. Stewart later abandoned Eutaw Springs and during the retreat, on October 22, Major Marjoribanks died of his wounds at the Wantoot Plantation where he was buried. His grave was marked with a slab of cypress wood inscribed with these words:

JOHN MARJORIBANKS Esq.
late major to the 19th Regt. Inf.
and commanding a Flank Bat.
of His Majesty's Army — Obiit
22nd of Oct. 1781.

The wooden marker lasted for 60 years before the plantation owner, Daniel Ravenel, replaced it with a concrete slab. In 1941. The plantation area was flooded by the erection of a dam, but not before the concrete memorial to the gallant Major Marjoribanks was moved to higher ground.

Balbardie House

After John Marjoribanks of that ilk disposed of the family lands in Annandale to Samuel Johnstone of Scheyns in about 1630, he acquired the Balbardie estates in Bathgate from his nephew.

In 1696 the property was raised by the King to the status of a barony at a nominal annual rent of a pair of gilt spurs or two silver shillings — but only if the King asked for them.

(A Scottish baron, unlike his counterpart in England, is not a member of the peerage but simply someone who holds a large estate or manor from the Crown.)

The Marjoribankses presided over these estates like minor and benevolent feudal lords until 1824 when Alexander Marjoribanks of that ilk, who was known as "the guid auld laird," surrendered his rights and promoted an Act of Parliament which made Bathgate a free and independent burgh. In recognition of his generosity, Alexander was elected the first provost (Scottish equivalent of a mayor) of Bathgate, an office which he held until 1827.

The Marjoribanks residence, Balbardie House, was built in the middle of the 18th century from plans drawn by the famous Scottish architect Robert Adam and his brother James. It had to be abandoned as a residence when coal-mining operations, which provided much of the laird's income, threatened its foundations.

It was sold in 1861 but survived until the 1950s when, in spite of efforts to preserve it as a community centre and a museum, it was demolished. The old laird, who was devoted to the happiness of his tenants, would be pleased to know that the site of his house now serves as a playground and a municipal golf course.

'Miss Marjoribanks'

Richard Marjoribanks of Busselton in Western Australia reports a literary find that might interest members of the family who are not familiar with the works of Margaret Oliphant, the Victorian novelist.

"I was strolling along Lothian Road in Edinburgh one Saturday about forty years ago," Richard writes. "I stopped to browse at a second-hand bookstall near the Usher Hall. There I first saw the novel called *Miss Marjoribanks* by Margaret Oliphant.

"Set in the fictitious English village of Carlingford, it tells the story of Miss Lucinda Marjoribanks and her father, the popular local doctor. It also gives a vivid picture of the candlelit, class-ridden society of the 1960s."

As a social commentary, Mrs. Oliphant's works have been compared with those of Jane Austen and Anthony Trollope. *Miss Marjoribanks* is part of a series of novels, *The Chronicles of Carlingford*.

The Marjoribankses in the story, like Mrs. Oliphant herself, are Scottish born. Richard speculates about why Mrs. Oliphant chose the name Marjoribanks for her fictional characters, but it seems likely that she knew something about the real-life family.

When her heroine finally marries, she and her husband go to live on "a nice little property that a gentleman could manage" called Marchbank (which is, of course, the name of the small farm near Lochmaben, the original Marjoribanks lands.)

The book was first published in Britain by Blackwood & Sons in 1866 but was republished in 1988 in an excellent paperback edition by Virago Press. It's available in good bookshops in Britain and North America.

Lesley Yung Kong Park Marjoribanks lives in Kuching in Sarawak, a province of Malaysia. It has taken several years of detective work and a fortuitous encounter to find him.

His presence first became known when Roger W. Marjoribanks of Perth Australia, a geologist, was registering in a hotel in Kuching. He was astonished—as we all are on these occasions — when the Chinese clerk knew how to spell his name. She said they had a regular visitor of the same name.

Roger later came across the name of Lesley Yung Kong Park Marjoribanks in the Kuching telephone directory but didn't have the time to call and neglected to make a note of the address. The next time he was in Kuching, the name had disappeared from the directory.

All trace of Lesley vanished until December 1990 when Vernon Mullen of Ottawa, a former Canadian government development officer, on being introduced to a member of the family said, "Marjoribanks! I knew a Marjoribanks in Kuching!"

In the course of his work he had lived next door to Lesley and often shared a car with him to the office in the morning. Lesley, he said, was the son of Dr. E.M. Marjoribanks, a physician in the service of Charles Vyner Brooke, the third of the White Rajahs of Sarawak. His mother was Chinese.

(Charles Vyner Brooke's great-uncle, Sir James Brooke, was created Rajah of Sarawak in 1838 by a grateful sultan in return for helping him put down a native uprising.)

Lesley's trail disappeared again. Mr. Mullen had no mailing address for him but he undertook to canvass his former colleagues to see if anyone could provide a trace. Finally, six months later, a former student obtained Lesley's address from the local Anglican church and he has been invited to make contact with his kin around the world through The Marjoribanks Family.

First Lady Cyclist

A reader sends a clipping from an unidentified newspaper listing famous "female firsts".

Among women who were first to pass a driver's test, become an editor, smoke cigarettes, wear a bikini, and climb Mount Everest was Mary Marchbank, 1842, the world's first lady cyclist.

Letter to the Editor

The Editor,
The Marjoribanks Letter:

My late husband was engaged in the timber trade and had many contacts in Scandinavia. On one occasion he had a Finnish gentleman to entertain. So as to make up a four for dinner, he invited my sister-in-law, Sally Marjoribanks, to join us.

He duly introduced her to Mr. Suopankki who, to our astonishment, exclaimed, "Ah, we share the same name!" Asked to explain, he replied: "Suo means 'marsh' in Finnish and pankki means 'banks.'!"

After that, the party was a great success!

Diana Hodge
Edinburgh

After every mailing, we get half a dozen envelopes back with the sad announcement "gone away" or "unknown at this address."

We hate to lose touch with you when we have gone to so much trouble to find you. If you're going to move soon, or have moved recently, please let us know your new address.

* * *

If you know of anyone who might like to get *The Marjoribanks Letter*, or if you have news or ideas you would like to share, questions you would like to ask, please drop us a line.

* * *

We recently received a new shipment of family ties so, if you've been waiting for them, you can send your order to:

Robert Marjoribanks
34 Swanston Avenue
Edinburgh EH10 7BY
Scotland

They are polyester, in the colours of the Chief's coat of arms, a black background with stripes of red and gold and 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

* * *

A limited number of back issues of *The Marjoribanks Letter* are still available at the equivalent of \$3.00 each in Canadian funds.

Please say which issues you would like: #1, March, 1987; #2, March 1988; #3, March, 1989; #4, February, 1990; #5, August, 1990.

* * *

And while you're thinking about it, have a look at your membership card. The date in the bottom-right corner shows when it's time to renew your fees. If you forget, we'll send you a notice but it will save postage if you think of it first.

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*
The United Kingdom	£10.00	£20.00
<i>If you prefer, fees may be paid in local currencies at the following rates:</i>		
The United States	\$18.00 (U.S.)	\$36.00
Canada	\$20.00 (Can)	\$40.00
Australia	\$23.00 (Aus)	\$46.00
New Zealand	\$30.00 (NZ)	\$60.00

* Family membership includes parents and their dependent children.

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

Robert Marjoribanks
Honorary Secretary
The Marjoribanks Family
2228 Kipling Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 6T5
Canada.