



# THE Marjoribanks LETTER

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

## 1998 GATHERING HONOURS FIRST CANADIAN SETTLERS

To honour the first members of the family to settle in Canada, the 1998 Marjoribanks Gathering will be held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, September 4, 5 and 6.

The site was proposed at the 1997 Annual Meeting in Dumfries, Scotland by Allan Marchbank who lives with his wife Verna and three daughters on a farm near Truro, Nova Scotia. His great-great-grandfather, James Marchbank, left his farm near Annan in Dumfriesshire and settled a few miles north of Summerside P.E.I. in 1825. James and his wife, the former Mary Walker, had nine children, five boys and four girls. Most of the boys, after some adventures in the gold fields of Australia and California, followed their father's profession as farmers, as do many of their modern descendants.

James's great-grandson William Campbell Marchbank (1884-1973) led the family's migration to Western Canada. William's son Verlin - known as Lin - served for almost a quarter-century in The Royal Canadian Mounted Police on Baffin Island and other remote northern outposts.

Gabriel Marchbank, also from Dumfriesshire, emigrated to New Brunswick at about the same time that James went to Prince Edward Island. Gabriel established a successful ship-building business at St. Martin. He had two sons and a daughter with his first wife, Euphemia Carson, and another son by his second wife, Elizabeth Mosher. He died some time after 1871.

The 1997 Gathering was held May 31, June 1 and 2 in conjunction with the South of Scotland Clans and Families International Gathering 1997 - known as ROOTS 97 for short - a celebration of the neglected history and culture of those people whose roots lie north of the English border and south of the rivers Clyde and Forth.

After a welcoming reception and an ecumenical church service on the Friday evening, we joined two thousand of our compatriots, representing more than thirty Clans and Families.

We assembled in a field of tents, each one flying the heraldic banner of its chief or colourful Clan and Family pennants, like a mediaeval encampment on the eve of battle. On a clear, hot summer's day, pipers played and marched, children danced, craftsmen displayed their skills, and the crowd moved from tent to tent, meeting old friends, making new ones, following the traces of long-lost ancestors, and pausing from time to time for an ice cream or a single-malt whisky. There were many-hued kilts and feathered bonnets but there was no tossing of cabers, hurling of stones and hammers or other feats usually performed at "highland" games. The celebration was intended to emphasize the contribution of Southern Scots and to counter the idea that the South of Scotland is just an ante-room through which one must pass before reaching the romantic highlands.

At the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday morning, the Chief read a message from the Vice President, George Marchbank



*Our Chief, Andrew Marjoribanks of that 11k, and his wife Fiona lead the Marjoribanks contingent in the Grand March at the ROOTS 97 celebration in Dumfries. Also in attendance at the Gathering were two of the Chief's three daughters, Catriona and Faith.*

of Derbyshire, conveying his regrets that, because of illness, neither he nor his wife Doris were able to attend. His letter concluded, "Cheerio! God bless you all. May you all have an enjoyable and memorable week-end."

The Chief also brought greetings from Sir James Marjoribanks in Edinburgh, President Emeritus of The Family, who suffers a disability that prevented him from attending.

Robert Marjoribanks, the Honorary Secretary, reported that, although there had been a slight decline in current memberships, finances were still in a healthy state and there was a balance in the bank of about \$1,000 in Canadian funds.

At the suggestion of Anne Marjoribanks Humphrey of Salisbury the Executive Committee agreed to look into the possi-

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## MARJORIBANKS QUOTED IN BOMBER'S TRIAL

The Marjoribanks name cropped up in the trial of Timothy McVeigh who was convicted in the 1995 the bombing of a U.S. government building in Oklahoma City in which 168 people lost their lives.

McVeigh's lawyer, Stephen Jones, in his summation to the jury, spoke about the role of the defence lawyer in a jury trial.

He said:

"Over seventy-five years ago, the great and famous British barrister, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, was privileged to have a biography written of him by a man by the name of Edmond Marjoribanks. In the second paragraph of the first chapter, Mr. Marjoribanks wrote: 'Now it is difficult for any man who whose life, liberty and reputation rests upon the decision of twelve strangers, chosen from among the population, according to the instructions of the court and the evidence to decide his fate; hence has arisen the honourable profession of the advocate whose responsibility is narrower than a statesman's but broader than a physician's.'"

The biography to which Mr. Jones referred is "For the Defence, The Life of Sir Edward Marshall Hall," and it was written by Edward (not Edmond) Marjoribanks, the son of Hon. Archibald Marjoribanks and grandson of Sir Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks, First Baron Tweedmouth.

Mr. Jones in attempting to quote Edward's book from memory got it badly garbled. Here is what Edward wrote:

"Now, it is difficult for any man, however wise or eloquent, to speak for himself, when fortune, reputation, happiness, life itself, are in jeopardy and rest on the decision of strangers, sworn before God to find an impartial verdict from the evidence brought before them. Hence has arisen the honourable and necessary profession of the advocate; it is indeed a high and responsible calling; for into his keeping are entrusted the dearest interests of other men. His responsibility is wider in its scope than a physician's, and more direct and individual than that of a statesman; he must be something of an actor, not indeed playing a well learned part before painted scenery, but fighting real battles on other men's behalf, in which at any moment surprise may render all rehearsal and preparation futile."

Edward dedicated the book to "My Uncle, Major General Lytle Brown D.S.M., C.B., Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army." General Brown was evidently a brother of Edward's mother, the former Elizabeth Brown of Nashville, Tennessee.

Edward was born in 1900, educated at Eton and Oxford, and became a barrister, a Member of Parliament, and the much admired author of legal biographies. He shot himself at the age of 32 in a fit of depression, aggravated by an unhappy love affair. He had just finished the first volume of a biography of Lord Carson, the distinguished Irish statesman and jurist, and it was published by The Macmillan Company shortly after his death.

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ility of producing a Marjoribanks tartan. Many members of the family wear the Johnstone tartan, with the concurrence of the Johnstone Chief, because of the historical connection between the two families. It was also suggested that a family banner might be designed, distinct from the Chief's own heraldic banner, which could be displayed at highland gatherings and on other occasions.

During the genealogy session, Roger Marjoribanks of Surrey reported that he had received "an enormous quantity" of material from Juanita Dean Huffaker of Arleta, California, regarding the life

## Coutts Fondly Remembered

A recent book about remittance men in the Canadian West casts some light on the character of The Honourable Coutts Marjoribanks, a younger son of Dudley Marjoribanks, the First Baron Tweedmouth.

Remittance men were generally so-called because they were, for various reasons, an embarrassment to their aristocratic families and were shipped off to the colonies where they lived in obscurity sustained by regular remittances of cash from their fathers.

Coutts wasn't exactly in that category but he had little enthusiasm for the church or the army and had no head for business. Lord Tweedmouth bought a ranch in North Dakota for Coutts and another in Texas for Coutts's brother Archibald. They had no management skills or knowledge of North American cattle and both enterprises failed.

Coutts got a second chance when his brother-in-law, the Earl of Aberdeen, the husband of Coutts's sister Ishbel, bought him a ranch in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. The Canadian venture was no more successful than his North Dakota ranch but Coutts settled down, married and became a respected citizen in the town of Vernon, where he died in 1924 at the age of 64.

He is fondly remembered in Vernon where he regularly rode his big black horse up onto the verandah of the local hotel. Some of his encounters with the people of Vernon are recorded in a book by Mark Zuelke, "Scoundrels, Dreamers and Second Sons: British Remittance Men in the Canadian West" (Whitecap Books, Vancouver/Toronto, 1994.)

Coutts was intimidated by his sister Ishbel who had a world-wide reputation as the soul of virtue. He was herding his cattle onto a train one day, urging them forward with loud obscenities. The Presbyterian minister who was passing by reproached him for using foul language in front of his men.

"Hell, man, I'm not teaching Sunday school," Coutts replied. "I'm loading cattle and I'm giving the boys the best example I can. I bet Noah swore when he was loading the animals into the Ark." Turning to a friend, he explained: "You know my sister has so much godliness that there wasn't enough to go round the rest of the family."

When he heard that Ishbel was coming to visit he was afraid that she might be shocked by some of the paintings in his house and he persuaded a local artist to come and look at them so he could tell his sister, "That artist fellow said they were all right."

"You know," Coutts said, "my sister has such infernally straight-laced ideas about modesty that she thinks all the figures in life subjects should be dressed from the ankles right up to the neck.

Coutts and his brother Archie will be the subject of an article, "The Honourable Cowboys," in a forthcoming issue of *The Marjoribanks Journal*.

in Virginia of George Marjoribanks (later Marchbanks) who was transported after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. He was continuing his researches into George's ancestry and was pursuing information about the family of George Marchbank of Derbyshire whose ancestors are believed to have migrated to Yorkshire from Scotland in the middle of the 16th century.

"I'm always glad to get both information and queries from anyone," Roger said. "I don't guarantee to be able to answer the queries but I'll always do my best and I do have contacts that can sometimes help.

Prince Edward Island, the site of next year's gathering, is the smallest of the ten Canadian provinces.

It is roughly crescent-shaped and about a 170 miles from one end to the other. Nowhere is it more than 36 miles wide. If you measure all of the tidal inlets, many of them lined with sandy beaches, there are more than a thousand miles of coastline. It accounts for only one one-thousandth of Canada's land area.

Charlottetown, the provincial capital, is sometimes called The Cradle of Confederation because the provincial delegates first met there to discuss the creation of the Dominion of Canada.

The population is about 135,000 but it attracts five times that number of summer visitors. Most of them come to renew memories of the perennially popular "Anne" books - "Anne of Green Gables" and seven sequels - written by Lucy Maude Montgomery in the early years of this century. Her home at Cavendish has become kind of a shrine.

The local people are overwhelmingly of British origin (mostly Scots) with about 15,000 *Acadians*, descendants of the few hundred French settlers who remained after the British occupation of the island in 1758.

It was visited in 1534 by Jacques Cartier who called it "the fairest island that could possibly be seen." The French named it Ile St. Jean but the British changed it to Prince Edward Island in 1799 in honour of one of the sons of King George III who was serv-

ing at the time with the British army in Halifax.

The climate is mild, moderated by the warm Gulf Stream which flows up from the southern U.S. states. In September the temperature rarely gets above 22 degrees Celsius (71 degrees Fahrenheit) and drops to about eight degrees (46 Fahrenheit) at night.

Honouring its 124-year commitment to maintain "continuous communication" between the island and the mainland, the federal government in June, 1997, completed the Confederation Bridge, spanning the Northumberland Strait between Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick and Borden-Charleton, Prince Edward Island. It's nine miles long, the longest continuous-span bridge in the Western hemisphere. Using the bridge, you can drive from Halifax to Charlottetown in about two and a half hours or, if you're not in a hurry and modern engineering doesn't excite you, a ferry makes the trip from Caribou, Nova Scotia to Wood Islands, Prince Edward Island every hour. The fastest - but not the cheapest - crossing is a 25-minute flight from Halifax to Charlottetown.

There is certain to be an ample supply of lobsters as well as the Island's famous Malpeque oysters. Its prime-quality potatoes have given the province the nickname "Spud Island" but residents, wherever they go, refer to their home simply as "The Island" and are likely to be annoyed if you ask, "What island would that be?"

### 'Margiebanks' is Discovered

A lady approached the Marjoribanks tent at the highland games in Orlando, Florida this year. She said that she had a friend called Margiebanks Barrett and she wondered if there might be some connection with our family.

She didn't have an address for Margiebanks but she thought we could get in touch with her through her church in Titusville, Florida.

Robert Marjoribanks, the Honorary Secretary, wrote to her in care of the church. Months passed and he heard nothing. When finally she wrote, she explained that she had misplaced our address.

It turned out that her given name was not Margiebanks but Marjoribanks - Mrs. Marjoribanks Barrett. She was not at all sure where her given name had come from but she did remember a photograph that used to hang on her grandmother's wall, a picture of a small stone house and, under the picture was written: "*The home of Samuel Marjoribanks, Thornhill, Perthshire, Scotland, who emigrated to Chester, South Carolina, in 1794.*"

That Samuel, later known as Samuel Banks, was of course the founder of the Banks branch of the family in America. With some help from James Green and other members of the Banks tribe, Robert was able to write back to Mrs. Marjoribanks Barrett, tracing her family through William Banks Dove Sr., who was The Secretary of State for South Carolina early in this century, and Elizabeth Banks who was Samuel's daughter, right back to Perthshire in the early 18th century and to the little house that appeared on her grandmother's wall.

"Thank you so much for telling me about my family!" Mrs. Barrett wrote. "I couldn't believe it and I was really thrilled!"

### Having Tea With the Earl

Members attending the 1997 Gathering were entertained at tea on Sunday afternoon by the Earl and Countess of Annandale and Hartfell at Raehills, their country house near Dumfries.

The Earl is the chief of the Johnstone Clan and the Johnstones have an historical association with the Marjoribankses. The Marjoribanks lands in Dumfriesshire were sold in the 17th century to Samuel Johnstone of Schevyns, shortly after the family acquired Balbardie. Some of the Johnstones then assumed the name Marjoribanks from their newly acquired lands.

The Earl and Countess, with their two dogs, met us at the door and before going inside, conducted us around their gardens and a spectacular display of rhododendrons. The Earl is intimately familiar with his family treasures and can recite unaided a brief history of each of his ancestors whose portraits are displayed in the Long Hall, and can talk knowledgeably about porcelain, glass, silver and the tapestries that line his walls.

Tea was served in the formal dining room while Lord Annandale entertained us with accounts of domestic disasters - the painters who burned a hole in the drawing-room carpet, the overflowing bathtub that ruined the dining-room wallpaper.

We lingered so long that there was no time before dinner to visit the ancestral lands near Moffat and that experience was put off for another day.

## An 'Appropriate' Gesture

Our presence in South Carolina during the 1996 Gathering did not go unnoticed.

Fred K. Norris Jr. lives on the St. Julien plantation, a land grant from King George II, about four miles from the site of the Battle of Eutaw Springs and the grave of Major John Marjoribanks of His Majesty's 19th regiment of Foot who died heroically in the battle.

Mr. Norris was out for a walk one afternoon and noticed the Union Jack flag and the flowers that we had left on the grave. The message, "From the Marjoribanks Family," was written on the back of the Honorary Secretary's calling card.

Mr. Norris has a particular interest in the battle since some of its preliminary skirmishes took place on his property. He wrote to Robert Marjoribanks to say:

"I think your gesture of placing your flag and flowers on this grave is most appropriate. I have always felt that Major Marjoribanks was one of the most skilled and effective officers for the Crown in this battle. He was able to hold his position along the Creek and took a heavy toll of the Continental forces."

Mr. Norris later spoke to a meeting sponsored by the Military Heritage Preservation Project and read to the audience Robert's letter containing a brief history of the family and some notes on Major Marjoribanks's career and his origins in the parish of Eccles in Berwickshire.

Mr. Norris sent an article from a 1942 issue of the newspaper, *The State*, published in Columbia, South Carolina on August 1, 1942, describing a luncheon given by the Columbia Chamber of Commerce at which James Marjoribanks, the British consul at Jacksonville, Florida, was the guest of honour. (He is now Sir James Marjoribanks K.C.M.G., the president emeritus of the family.) A lady spoke to Sir James after the luncheon and told him about the Major's grave.

"Of course, he was greatly interested," the newspaper reported. "A relative of his, he surmised. And so over the gap of 161 years the living was made familiar with the facts of the death and burial of a probable ancestor."

## John Marjoribanks Eskdale Askew

Major John Marjoribanks Eskdale Askew, popularly known as Jock, died at Coldstream last November after a lengthy illness.

Jock's mother was a Marjoribanks in the Lees branch of the family and Jock lived most of his life at Ladykirk House near Coldstream, the residence of David, Lord Marjoribanks.

Jock was once described as "a magnificent man on a horse" and, in addition to riding to the hounds, took part in point-to-point cross-country races.

He was commissioned in 1932 in the 2nd battalion of the Grenadier Guards and, during World War II, attained the rank of major. He was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1974 and was distinguished by being appointed a member of the Royal Company of Archers, the Queen's Body Guard for Scotland.

## Notes from the Secretary

I was sorry to have to tell the meeting in Dumfries that there was a slight decline in membership in the last twelve months – from 137 to 132.

I believe interest in The Family is still growing and that there are two reasons for the lower numbers.

First, members – some of them active, long-standing members – misplace their membership cards, have trouble remembering when their fees are due, and let their membership lapse. I will begin sending reminders to members who have forgotten to keep their membership up to date.

Second, there are many members who are keenly interested in the family, who exchange information about genealogies, but have never got around to becoming members of The Marjoribanks Family. I will suggest to them that it would be fair to make sure that the cost of administering Family activities is evenly distributed.

I have a new supply of family ties. If you haven't seen them, they're polyester with a black background, the family badge in gold and silver thread, and two red-and-gold-stripes. They cost \$20 Canadian or the equivalent in other currencies.

Allan Marchbank has booked us into The Prince Edward Hotel in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. The hotel has set aside a block of rooms for us at a reduced price: \$142 in Canadian funds per night for a double room. It's the only hotel on The Island rated four stars by the Canadian Automobile Association and you can make a reservation by writing or telephoning:

The Prince Edward Hotel  
18 Queen St.  
Charlottetown P.E.I. C1A 8B9  
Canada  
(902) 566-2222 or 1-800-441-1414

In the meantime, remember that we are a precious few, so take very great care of yourselves! Drop me a line, if you think of it. I'll see you in P.E.I.

*Robert Marjoribanks*  
*Honorary Secretary*

## The Marjoribanks Letter

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\* Family membership includes parents and their children.

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