

# ***BULLSEYE COMMEMORATIVE***

*Turnbull Clan Publication*

*March 2002 Special Edition*



## **DEATH OF PROMINENT TOWNSMAN**

The town has lost a familiar and worthy son by the sudden death in the Peel Hospital, of Mr. John Turnbull (49), St. Ables, proprietor of the old-established family grocery and wine merchanting business at 51 High Street.

Educated at Drumlanrig School and George Watson's College, Edinburgh, he served a design apprenticeship with Wilson & Glenny before leaving on the death of his father, Barrie, in 1954, to take over the shop, founded by his great-grandfather in 1855. In addition to supplying traditional and delicatessen foods, the firm exports it's own brand of whisky "Teviotdale Blend," to U.S.A., Australia and France, and to such prestigious customers as the Southampton Yacht Club.

My dear Dodie, By and Dana,

How can I start? Your letters have been such a great comfort and we know that although we are seperated by all those miles that you have been close to us all at this dreadful time. I keep hoping that it is a nightmare, but alas it is not so.

To go back to the beginning - John wakened me after 6 a.m. Monday, 22nd Feb. to say that he didn't feel well. I said 'have you a pain' - yes. Shall I send for Rory - yes. I knew then it was for real. Rory arrived and gave him an injection (he told me later that he thought he was going then as he couldn't find his pulse). 'Phoned for ambulance and another doctor to assist in case he had cardiac arrest on the journey to hospital. Hamish and I followed by car. Debbie had sat with John and held his hands. Normally she went back to college on the Sunday evening, but as she had an interview on the Monday she was still at home which was a blessing. Those two were very close and at least they had those few moments together.

Hamish and I drank pots of tea at the hospital then we were allowed in to see John before going back home. The nurse told me he was sedated, but when I asked him how he felt he said the pain was still very bad. I told him to do as he was told and that we would be in to see him that evening. As I kissed him goodbye he gave me a long look and held on to my hand. I think he knew. Little did I think it was our last farewell.

The rest of the day was spent trying to do the normal things and the 'phone never stopped ringing. Just after 4 p.m. the police car arrived at the door. They said that the hospital couldn't contact me by 'phone - my husband was in a critical condition. The extension had been left off the hook upstairs. Rory appeared at that moment as the specialist had 'phoned him to give him the bad news. John had had a cardiac arrest. They had got the heart going again but couldn't control his pulse. I 'phoned Barrie's flat in Edinburgh and one of the boys went straight up to the college to drive him to the hospital. When we arrived at the hospital the nurse ushered Hamish, Debbie and me into a side room. Rory went ahead to speak to the nurse - I sensed then that it was all over, and right enough Rory came in and said 'he's gone'. I said 'what do you mean?' he said Myra, he's been gone ten minutes ago. I just couldn't believe it. We all crumpled and then I asked to see John and Rory took me into the ward. Oh By and Dodie, he still looked tense with the fight. My beautiful John lying there so still. His forehead was still warm but his mouth when I kissed him for the last time was so cold. Hamish and Debbie went in to say their last farewell and somehow or other we arrived back home shattered. Barrie arrived minutes after we left. He caught sight of Hamish's car leaving the hospital, drove on to overtake, and heard the sad news. He too went into the hospital to say a last farewell to his Dad and I shall never forget the looks

feeling - we all felt the same - that the heavy atmosphere had lifted and we were all together again.

We had a private service in the house for family and a few friends and the Rev. George Watson gave a most touching and inspiring sermon. I have never seen a minister so emotionally upset and he has been so comforting to us all.

We then set off for the Crematorium, as John had wished to be cremated. The Chapel was packed - there must have been over 400 mourners. John would have been so proud to know so many of his friends had come to pay their last respects. It was a terrible ordeal for us all and we still couldn't believe that John had gone. I still can't believe it. It was all so sudden, but for John I suppose it was for the best, as I know he couldn't have accepted being an invalid. I know that with cardiac arrest there can be brain damage and that would have been too awful to bear. At the time I would have had him with us at any price, but that is selfish. I can only think that God must have needed him and that he will now be at peace with his other loved ones.

It has been a hard two years for John in business. Too many worries trying to keep in business against the supermarkets. The family grocer is a dying trade here, much is the pity. If only he had sold up last year instead of battling on.

Luckily, we had talked of what should be done with the business if anything happened to him. He was adamant that the boys should carry on with their own careers, so I have sold to one of the 'big boys'. When I see what he has been up against no wonder he had heart attacks. It will all take a bit of sorting out, but the family have been a great source of comfort and help. Nana too has been terrific - she has said so often - the Good Lord should have taken me instead. It must be hard on old folks to see someone so young die. 49 years - John would have been 50 on March 31st.

Weren't we so lucky to have that holiday with you last year. That is something I would have regretted had we not made it. John was raring to get back to California again - obviously he had lost his fear of flying - and was talking about another trip next year. In fact, the day before he died, Nana and he were sitting round the kitchen table folding the Clan newsletter into envelopes. He told her that she was definitely going the next trip with us. It was also strange - he suddenly asked her 'Are you afraid of dying Nana?' She said 'I never think of it John' and he replied 'well, I'm not'. That was only hours before. I wonder if he felt something then.

We would have been married for 26 years on April 17th this year. They have been wonderful and exciting years, for which I must be very grateful, but this aching pain seems too much to bear. Everything seems so empty and pointless

without John. I wait for his step along the path. I think the morning is the worst time - to face another day without him. Not to be able to touch and comfort. All the little things that one takes so much for granted. He has been a great husband and father.

The town has mourned his passing. The letters and cards have been overpowering, but when I can read them all again some day when the hurt has softened I am sure they will be a great inspiration to us all. He uplifted so many hearts with his open friendship. He had so much to give - it makes one wonder why the Good Lord had to take him so soon from us.

I feel so sorry for Debbie - this was to be her big year. Graduation and then her wedding in August. She is going to miss John by her side to share all those things which are special between father and daughter.

It is sad that we are so many miles apart but I know that our thoughts are close and that we have had a great experience together. Nothing will ever destroy that.

We love you all and look forward to being together again soon.

God Bless and our fondest love,  
Mylee.

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Love to Lark, Dennis - thank them for  
their sympathy - will try to drop them  
a note sometime

Congratulations to Steve too.

Subj:	Dear Cousin John:
Date:	11/12/01 5:50:23 PM Central Standard Time
From:	DanaHume
To:	Jschwk

Janet:

Here is the article you are requesting on how my family and the Turnbull's of Hawick met, and became life-long friends, er, "family." I don't know if this story is longer than you would like, but I will go ahead.

The following is the writing of my father's story, in his own words that I found, along with so much other Turnbulls of Hawick information:

Dr. Byron G. Turnbull:

In 1966 I was practicing in Oakland, CA., and my next door office neighbor, Dr. P. Chamberlain and I had a luncheon date. I was coming down with the Hong Kong flu. One look at me and he handed me a sample of a new drug which was supposed to alleviate the flu symptoms. I gladly accepted the pill, but after it's ingestion had a drug reaction. Dr. Chamberlain reported this reaction to the parent company in New Jersey and two weeks later their company Physician, Dr. John Pepper, flew out to interview me.

During the course of our conversation, Dr. Pepper mentioned a very close friend, a John Turnbull of Hawick, Scotland, and gave me his address. That afternoon I wrote a letter to John Turnbull of Hawick, which started, "Dear Cousin John." What a can of worms that opened. From then on we became very close friends, much like "family."

Now, my words:

I remember that time in the late '60's, very vividly. Our families started trading V-8 movies, cassette tapes, and I even started being a "pen-pal" to John's daughter, Debbie, then to Hamish and Barrie. My mother and father soon visited Hawick in 1973 and 1978. Meanwhile, the Turnbull's of Hawick did so in return. I had made my first trip to Hawick in 1978, and could not get enough! These were the best times of my life. I returned the following summer, just in time for the Common Riding. There were many conversations on how we were so much "alike," even though we were not "blood relatives." We *knew* deep down in our hearts, we *must be related!* There is such a strong bond, that when something in our families happen that is of importance, we phone each other right away.

I remember how devastated my father was with the news of John's passing in 1982. I have never seen my father so depressed; he had had such a rapport with John, more so than his own brothers, and *they* were close.

To this day, the Turnbulls of Hawick, with their now extended families, and our extended California families, are still closely bonded, always in touch. We always introduce each other as "Cousin....." on both continents. There is no question of blood.