

TURNBULL CAIRN AND TIME CAPSULE

By Wally Turnbull. TCA President and Honorary Chief

There is nothing we can create which connects us more to those who have gone before and will come after than a cairn. The unmistakably man-made pile of stones known in the Scottish Gaelic as a càrn (plural càirn) says “man was here and considered this place important.” Our ancestors put up cairns before their history was recorded in other ways. Cairns are found all over the world but nowhere are they more a part of the heritage of the land and people than in the Land of the Scots.

Cairns are built to say to God and to those who follow us that “we remember.” Three thousand years ago the prophet Samuel built a cairn between Mizpah and Shen and called it Ebenezer (Eben ha-’ezer) which means “stone of help” saying “Thus far the Lord has helped us.” 1 Samuel 7:12. The Bible refers to God Himself as a stone and a tower “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my stronghold in whom I take refuge, my shield, the glory of my salvation, and my high tower.” Psalm 18:2”

Yes, a cairn is important because it marks something important and also because it does something important. It says “I remember and want you to remember.” So, we will build a cairn in Bedrule, a bucolic hamlet in the Rule Valley of the Scottish Borders. Today Bedrule is a quiet place providing a peaceful place to live for its inhabitants who, in turn, provide sheep and cattle to the people of Scotland. The past of the Rule Valley was not so peaceful and those who lived its history paid a dear price for the life enjoyed today. Our cairn will show that we remember that and will encourage others to remember it too.

The Rule Water runs through the Rule Valley. As an important tributary of the Teviot River, Rule Water begins as a number of small burns (creeks) in the hills south of the valley which come together at the Forkins and run north for nine miles to meet the Teviot below Minto Craggs dominated by Fatlips Tower. Most of this area was in the parish of Abbotrule which included the villages of Hall of Roull, Toun of Roull, Butlerwell, Foul-toun (Foul Town), and Baddroull (Bedrule).

The Rule Valley was important because it had water and the land was good. About half the land is suitable for crops and the other half is top-quality grazing land. The inhabitants of the area, many of them Rules, eventually Turnbulls, grew in number developing villages and the market town of Foul Town (Foulton). Located at a low



A rendering of the Cairn and its placement in the Bedrule Kirkyard. (Not actual Cairn.)

point next to a burn the town was muddy and foul smelling in the rainy season and was awarded its odious name.

The high number of inhabitants and its proximity to the border made the Rule Valley important economically and politically to Scotland. In the early fourteenth century the Rule name was largely replaced by their Turnbull descendants and those who assumed the name of the famous William Rule Turn-e-bull.

The primary stronghold in the Rule Valley was Bedrule Castle originally built by the Comyns in the late thirteenth century during the reign of their kinsman John Balliol. When John “the Red” Comyn and Robert Bruce emerged as claimants to the throne of Scotland Bruce killed Comyn in the Dumfries Greyfriars Church in 1306. Bruce became king and the Comyns virtually disappeared. Their lands in the Borders were given to James Douglas, friend and patron of the Turnbulls. Douglas gave Bedrule Castle to the Turnbulls who maintained possession of it until around the time of the Second Jacobite Rebellion. The fortress castle along with Fulton tower, Mantoncrake (Minto Crag / Fatlips), and other borders fortifications were destroyed in 1545 during the rough wooing of the Mary, Queen of Scots, by Henry VIII for his son Edward VI.

The inhabitants of the Rule Valley with their power base at Bedrule Castle featured prominently in many battles during Scotland’s struggles for independence too numerous to describe here but described in greater detail in Norman Turnbull’s upcoming book *Border Tales and Trails*. As R.E. Scott puts it in *I Saved the King*, “Few Border battles have been recorded without one or other of the Turnbulls being implicated and, indeed, when the occasion arose, the whole of the clan rallied to the Douglasses, and their neighbours, in defending their country and their homeland, besides relishing any opportunity in battling with the ‘auld enemy’ over the Border.”

TURNBULL CAIRN AND TIME CAPSULE

John Leyden put it this way in *Scenes of Infancy*:

*... Where Tumbulls once, a race no power could awe,
Lined the rough skirts of stormy Ruberslaw:
Bold was the chief from whom their line they drew,
Whose nervous arm the furious bison slew...*

For those who called the Rule Valley home, defended it and helped bring independence to Scotland, for William Rule Turn-e-bull, Bishop William Turnbull, “Out with the Sword” John Turnbull, The Turnbulls hanged at Deadman’s Haugh, John F. Turnbull who founded TCA, Norman Turnbull our late High Shenachie, today’s wonderful inhabitants of the Rule Valley, to mark the location of Bedrule Castle, and to celebrate ourselves, we will build a cairn in Bedrule.

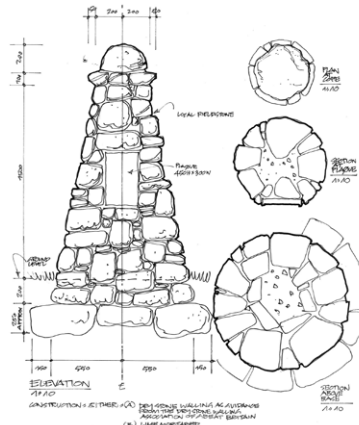
The cairn was conceived by Norman Turnbull, designed by Barrie Turnbull, and its construction is being overseen by Gemma Turnbull Barnard. It will look like a traditional Scottish cairn standing on the north side of the Bedrule Kirkyard but it will have a couple of fun twists to it. The cairn will include stones from places around the Borders of significance to the Turnbulls. The capstone will be a finial from Fatlips Castle given to Gemma during the recent restoration. Inside the cairn will be a stainless steel time capsule containing information about Rulewater, Turnbulls, and Bedrule Castle. To avoid vandalism nothing of monetary value will be included, only items of historical or sentimental importance. There will be a bronze plaque on the cairn briefly describing its significance.

With the time capsule and bronze plaque, the cairn will cost approximately US\$5,000 to build. With this issue of the Bullseye a fund-raising campaign is being undertaken to cover the cost. No gift is too large or too small. Everyone can and should participate.

There are still a few of the official Turnbull flags which were flown over the site of the Bedrule Castle. As long as the limited supply lasts, one of those flags including a certificate of authenticity, will be given to those who contribute \$500 or more to the cairn project.

Please support this project, not just because funds are needed but to be part of our long-standing tradition of thanking God for our blessings and honoring those who helped provide those blessings to us and future generations. Join the long-standing practice of our ancestors in raising a stone to say “I remember and I want those who follow to remember.”

Yours aye, PapaBull



*Barrie Turnbull's architectural plans
for the Turnbull Cairn*

Cairn Fund-Raising

One of the highlights of the 2014 AGM in Scotland next July will be the placing of the time capsule and unveiling of the Cairn in the Bedrule Kirkyard. But there's a long way to go to make that happen.

The Cairn needs to be constructed, the plaque made and engraved and the time capsule purchased. It is estimated that \$5000.00 US will be needed to

complete the project. You can help make this happen and be part of Borders history and preserving Turnbull history for generations to come. You can donate online by clicking the Donate button on the homepage (www.turnbullclan.com) or by mailing a check to the address below. There are a limited number of official Turnbull flags, flown above Bedrule Castle remains which will be given, while supplies last, for donations of \$500 or more. We're counting on your help to see Norman Turnbull's dream come true. US donations are tax deductible.

*Send checks made out to TCA to: Chris Nelson, 29 Fremont St
Tonawanda, NY 14150-2305*

