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By PHIL JOHNSON
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PICTURE: DEREK LUNN



Myra Turnbull 1931-2020

*Tributes flood in after passing
of former provost*

■ Full story on page 4

At a
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gg 151

By GRAHAM FORD
news@thehawickpaper.co.uk

he opening of the park
has been welcomed by the
community but this has also
brought problems as the
toilet at the café remains
closed. As mothers we all
understand that young
children need to have access
to a toilet, especially at a play
area, and I have contacted
SBC officers to try and
have this toilet opened as a
priority. Parents have had to
take their children behind
bushes to do the
toilet so it is a matter of
importance that the café
toilet be opened. Toilets
across the Borders will
be opened in a phased
approach and it is good to
see the toilet at the
Common Haugh open as we
gradually come out of lock
down. It is also good to see
that a 7 day deep
clean regime will be in place.
The opening of the park
has been welcomed by the
community but this has also

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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SOFT

Myra Turnbull: town ambassador who gave decades of civic service

By JAKE COLTMAN

news@thehawickpaper.co.uk

The passing of ex-Provost Myra Turnbull MBE on Sunday was greeted with deep sadness in the town by former colleagues and her wide circle of friends.

She died in Queens House care home, Kelso, aged 88.

Hawick's first lady provost, serving 1988-1996, gave more than 30 years of her life to public service which included 12 years with Roxburgh District Council (RDC), four as chairwoman; Hawick Common-Riding Committee chairwoman; and 24 years, initially on the committee then board member with Eildon Housing Association.

It was only in March 2017 that she decided to retire from public service, stepping down from her role with Eildon.

She first entered politics following the sudden death of her husband, John, in 1982. He ran the family grocers and whisky blenders at 51 High Street.

In 1984, Myra won the RDC Teviot South election, the same seat her late husband had held.

Her devotion to public service was recognised in 1996 when she was awarded an MBE.

In all her years in local government, she fought in particular for her native Hawick and also the entire Borders, and this passion is underlined in the tributes from those who had the

privilege to work with her.

Son Barrie told us: "Mum was very family-orientated and will be sadly missed by all of us, including the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and we are all immensely proud of what she has achieved in her civic life."

Leading the tributes, one of her close friends, Councillor Stuart Marshall, provost 2013-2017, told *The Hawick Paper*: "I know our townsfolk will be deeply saddened to hear this week of the death of Hawick's former First Lady, Myra Turnbull, who was without doubt an outstanding ambassador for Hawick down through the years and a truly remarkable servant to our town."

"When it came to representing Hawick, Myra always carried out her duties with such grace, finesse and elegance.

"She was also a very dear friend whom I will miss terribly and I will always be grateful for her many words of wisdom which often gave me the strength to carry on doing the job that I'm in today.

"Anyone who really knew Myra Turnbull also knew that her only goal in public life was to enrich our community and make it prosper – and she did."

Tom Hogg, honorary provost in the three years following Myra's eight-year term, also told us of the "commitment to her duties", saying: "It was with great sadness I learnt of the passing of our ex-



PICTURE: DEREK LUNN

provost. In my opinion, she was always a great ambassador for the town and did tremendous work for all during her term as provost and councillor.

"The town has lost another well-known and loved person. I always thought of Myra as a personal friend and it was my privilege to work with her for a number of years as a councillor with Roxburgh District Council, and also as her vice-chairman on the Common-Riding Committee.

"At all times Myra gave her full commitment to her duties, was always forthright and honest with her opinions, and was an excellent chairwoman.

"She will be sorely missed."

In 1994, as provost, she invited Lady Jane Grosvenor, the former wife of the Duke of Roxburghe and sister of the Duke of Westminster,

as Chief Guest at the Common-Riding, and a popular choice she proved to be.

This had the story of the pair barred from the all-male Hut hitting the headlines of the national press.

As the civic head of Hawick, she maintained the pair should be allowed in the Hut regardless of sex, and saying: "I do not discriminate. In the previous years, I have invited six gentlemen to be Chief Guest. I didn't want to be accused of excluding ladies myself."

Current provost, Watson McAteer, told us Myra "worked tirelessly" as a councillor for the town, saying: "Hawick has lost a highly respected and truly amazing character in the passing of our first lady honorary provost, Myra Turnbull MBE.

"Myra loved Hawick and its people and worked tirelessly as a Roxburgh District councillor to make sure that the town was heard and properly represented.

"She had a great love of our Common-Riding and continued to attend Provost Council ceremonial events whenever invited.

"It is a very sad day and on behalf of the townsfolk of Hawick, I offer my sincere and heart-felt sympathies to Myra's family and close friends."

Burnfoot Community Councillor Jamie Batten, who forged a close friendship with Myra as a fellow RDC councillor, expressed his regret at her

passing, telling us: "During my 35 years as councillor at Burnfoot Myra has been my mentor and confidant.

"She was a lady who would do anything for anybody."

Eildon Housing Association chief executive, Nile Istephan, added: "We are sad to learn of the passing of Myra Turnbull MBE. She served with distinction on the board of the association for nearly a quarter-of-a-century. This volunteering effort underlined her commitment to public service to her community, for which she was awarded the MBE in 1996.

"Myra was a passionate champion of the work of Eildon Housing Association and all things for the good of the Borders, and in particular her beloved home town of Hawick.

"She brought a breadth of knowledge and experience to her role as a board member, however, it was engaging with people where she really came into her own.

"A natural communicator and comfortable in any formal or informal situation, she would light up a room with her warmth, personality, storytelling and dry humour.

"She will be sadly missed by all at Eildon.

"Our thoughts and best wishes go out to her family and friends."

Myra leaves children Barrie, Debbie and Hamish, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

■ DEATH NOTICE, PAGE 10