

Family's plea for photo

by Graeme Strachan

A FAMILY are holding out hope that someone may be able to provide them with photograph of their Angus ancestor.

Montrose man William F McHardy penned a series of tributes to his hometown and the north-east of the country.

First published in 1899, Bonnie Montrose included stories of colourful residents, the beauty of the changing seasons and the harsh winters.

The Courier recently told how the McHardy family's dream of bringing the book back to print after 115 years had won the hearts of royals.

Bob McHardy, the author's great-great-grandson, decided to re-issue the book as a gift for his father's 70th birthday in September.

He sent a copy of the book to prominent

figures, including the Queen and Prime Minister David Cameron. He received letters of thanks from everyone who received a copy, including Mr Cameron who said the book was "wonderfully reminiscent of Scotland at the turn of the 20th Century" and it was "a real achievement that it has now been preserved for future generations to enjoy".

The family, however, do not own a single photograph of the author and hope that might change by issuing a public appeal.

Bob said: "Yes the lack of a photo is indeed a mystery.

"My dad said that in his lifetime there was never a photograph he has seen or been shown of his father's grandfather.

"There could be a number of reasons for this. I have an article about the burning of the Black Horse pub where back then all the family lived before the fire.

"We could imagine that a lot of our family history, such as photographs, were lost back then.

"Thankfully, no one was injured or worse but some animals did perish, including the author's monkey."

William F McHardy's eldest son woke to find the staircase filled with smoke, roused the family and opened the outside door.

The draught speedily fanned the fire into flames but the family managed to get out.

The internal staircase was burned while

the kitchen, part of the bar and the front rooms were gutted and furniture destroyed.

The author's favourite dog, a monkey, four parrots and some canaries all perished.

Bob added: "When my dad's gran, Agnes, passed away, unfortunately the houses had to be sold.

"My father recalls coming back to Montrose with my grandfather to collect what they could and carry it by hand on to the train home."

Bob said his old house in Sighthill, Springburn, was flooded in 2007 and again the family lost photos, paperwork and newspaper clippings from years gone by.

He would love to hear from anyone who knew the family or has photographs they would be willing to let him see.

People can contact the family through the website <http://bonniemontrose.co.uk>.

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Bob McHardy.