

Book dream now a reality

by **Graeme Strachan**

A FAMILY'S dream to bring their Angus ancestor's book back to print after 115 years has won the hearts of royals and politicians.

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

Montrose man William F McHardy penned a series of tributes to his hometown and the north east of the country, depicting life in the "Eden of Scotland".

First published in 1899, it includes stories of colourful locals, the beauty of the changing seasons and the harsh Angus winters.

Mr McHardy said: "I never thought for one second the book could be brought back from near extinction, but it has and now a new audience can read the poems, songs and thoughts from over 100 years past.

"I came up with this idea initially as a gift idea for my dad's birthday. I was also conscious the original book, that was handed down, and is signed by the author's grandson, William F McHardy, had seen better days and there was a real possibility that the book itself — and its stories and history — could be lost.

"History is important to us — and my dad is a man for telling us stories of his time in the beautiful town of Montrose where he would spend every holiday as a boy.

"The family home back then was situated at 102, 104, and 106 North Esk Road, a three home plot stretching some distance down Broomfield Road and where Robertson's Memorial business sits today.



The book launch in Montrose with, from left, Bob McHardy, his father Robert, the fifth generation William McHardy and Bob's brother William. Top right: Agnes, the wife of the author's son, with Bob McHardy's grandfather William and his dad Robert in Montrose in the 1950s and, right, Bob's dad Robert again in the 1950s.

"Dad also told us of a history going back to the 1800s and a name that would be special to the family even today, William F McHardy.

"As I thought about my plan, I wanted to do this tastefully and obviously tie my brother in and his son, both William, as they carry the name on today and into the future.

"So as far as I know we are on to the fifth

generation of William McHardy, although the author had another son, James McHardy, so there may be more out there."

Mr McHardy managed to bring the book back to life and it was published by Mereo Books with profits going to British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research UK.

Mr McHardy 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".

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