

■ A BOOK of poems and songs forgotten for more than a century has been published by the author's great-great-grandson to raise money for charity.

Montrose man William F McHardy penned a series of tributes to his home town 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.

For years it was unheard of outside of the McHardy family until Bob McHardy, of Cumbernauld, decided to reissue the book as a 70th birthday present for his father.

He 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."

Published by Mereo Books, profits will go to Cancer Research UK, British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK.

# A t to c

**A**S HE approaches his birthday next month Alasdair Gray remains a towering figure in Scotland's cultural landscape. The artist, playwright and poet played a rambunctious part in the referendum campaign, clearly revelling in his role as outspoken icon of the national movement.

In particular, his descriptions of English people living in Scotland either "settlers" or "colonists" caused a huge furore – although he was wrongfooted by the pro-unionist critics. He was "excited" by the prospect of an offer in the event of a No vote.

Ultimately, no matter who you are part of the '45' or the '55' new exhibitions are proving a reminder that the entire country should celebrate Gray's life.

Gray was born in Riddrie, on December 28, 1934, and as the family was evacuated to Lanarkshire and then Yorks during the War, he will always be associated with Scotland's largest city.

Fittingly, the first part of the Gray Season opened at the Edinburgh Art Gallery and Museum last week showcasing more than 100 paintings from his student days at The Glasgow School of Art to the present day.

It includes loans from private and public collections around the country, bringing together some of his