

Tom finally fulfils his Bloodlines ambition



BLOODLINES: Co-author Tom McKerley who was brought up in Gartlea.

By **Michael Pringle**

IT WASN'T until he retired that Tom McKerley was able to fulfil a lifetime ambition.

The Airdrie man recently had his first book published. Tom who was brought up in Gartlea co-wrote the book *Bloodlines: Touch not the Cat* with Ingrid Schippers, who lives in the Netherlands.

The 59-year-old former pupil of Alexandra and Tollbrae primary schools and Airdrie High left the town in 1975.

He moved to Holytown before taking up a job in digital equipment based in Ayrshire and now lives in Troon with his wife Joyce.

The *Bloodlines* story is a mystery that flits back and forth between Victorian times and three days this year.

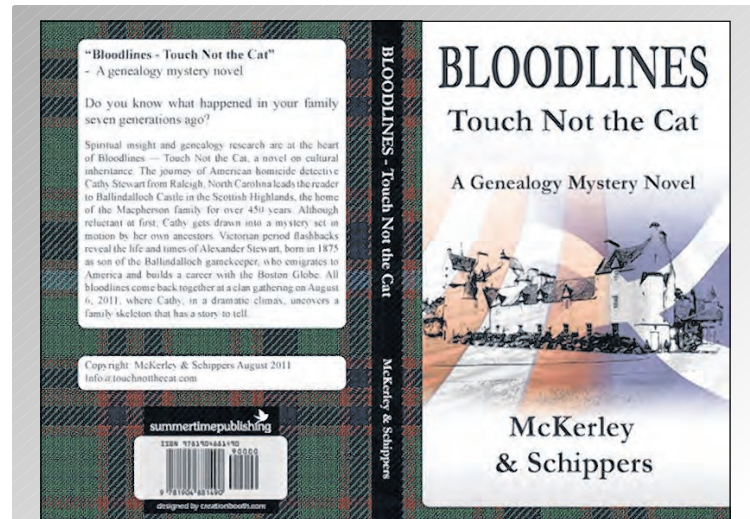
At the heart of it is the disappearance of a Scottish Laird in 1895 and a present-day American detective.

Tom had aspirations to write for a living as a teenager.

He admitted: "When I was leaving school I desperately wanted to be a journalist and managed to get an O Grade in shorthand, but journalism was really difficult to break in to."

It was by chance that he finally managed to co-write a novel.

Tom explained: "Ingrid was my yoga teacher and asked me to be her business mentor, so I was giving her business advice, got to know her a bit



better and we got chatting.

"She mentioned a strange dream that she had, to do with her ancestors and getting involved in something that happened a long time ago.

"I told her that I had already been involved in family genealogy and tracing my family tree – the idea of the story grew from there.

"I thought it would only be a short story and I could write the opening chapter, but we spoke through Skype for around six to eight weeks and then we got together for four or five days and wrote intensively.

"It took us two years and I went up

to Speyside to carry out some research."

Although Ingrid had some writing experience, this is also her first novel.

The two are already working on a sequel to the book.

Bloodlines: Touch not the Cat was officially launched at the American Book Centre in the Hague earlier this month, it is available for Kindle priced at £5.74 and from www.amazon.co.uk priced £8.99 including postage and packing. More information can be found at www.touchnotthecat.com