

Author Tom is a time traveller

By Lisa Boyle

HE'S spent his career in IT travelling the world.

But computer expert turned author Tom McKerley now spends his time on a journey through the ages.

Tom's first novel travels through 450 years and seven generations of the Macpherson family history.

Bloodlines – Touch Not The Cat takes readers through an exciting mystery.

American homicide detective Cathy is reluctantly drawn into the mystery of a Laird who went missing more than 100 years ago.

The investigation takes her back to her roots at Ballindalloch Castle in the Scottish Highlands.

The details of the 450-year-old unsolved mystery are told in flashbacks from the present day.

Although the book has only been on sale since August, it's already getting rave reviews from across the world including from Geneva, the USA and Japan.

That's something that has taken Troon man Tom and his Dutch co-



CHANGE: Tom McKerley's first book is set to be a big hit.

author Ingrid Schippers by surprise.

Tom explained: "I lived in Holland for 10 years and I met Ingrid through a yoga class I went to. She had written several books and after learning about my background she

asked if I'd be her project manager.

"At one of our meetings, she told me about a dream she had where she went back in time and met her ancestors. By chance I had done a bit of research into my family background so that's where the idea came from."

But Tom and his wife Joyce decided to move back to Scotland and so it was thanks to the wonders of technology the plan to write a book went ahead across continents.

"Thank God for Skype", explained Tom.

"The whole thing was done electronically through emailing chapters back and forward and meetings over Skype."

But throughout the two year process, Tom went back to Holland several times and Ingrid came to Scotland to visit the Highlands.

Writing a book has been a complete change of direction for Tom, who spent years working for Digital on the outskirts of Ayr.

After spending years working all over the world, the 59-year-old has now settled in Troon where he is lapping up his new roll as doting grandfather to five-month-old Jessica.

But Bloodlines is never far from his mind.

Just this week he received a Christmas card from the current Laird of Ballindalloch Castle offering him use of the castle for a launch.

Tom added: "We wanted to leave things open for a sequel. So that could be on the way in 2012."

Bloodlines – Touch Not The Cat is available on Amazon and Waterstones in Ayr priced at £8.99.

For more information log on to www.touchnotthecat.com



LAUNCH: Tom and Ingrid (both seated) received a lot of support from Oxfam in Troon who marketed and sell the book. They are pictured with staff and customers.

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Gold for village school design

COMONELL Primary has won another prestigious award for its design.

And this one's a gold – from the Glasgow Institute of Architecture.

The £1.5 million eco-friendly school features a grass roof.

And it is built with high levels of insulation and low cost heating, powered by air source heat pumps.

The school previously scooped two silver awards in the annual Roses Design Awards.

But now its iconic and outstand-

ing design has bagged gold.

The award goes to Ayr-based architects ARPL, who designed the school to accommodate 50 pupils in two composite classes and a nursery class for 10 children.

The school has spacious teaching area, a dining and sports hall, a central open area with a library and a variety of spaces for the staff.

Councillor Hywel Davies has special responsibility for education on South Ayrshire Council.

He said: "This school is an out-

standing success. The pupils and staff enjoy learning and teaching there, parents and local residents are happy with it, and it is everything that we planned for and more.

"For the school to receive a Glasgow Institute of Architecture Gold Award is truly outstanding.

"The pupils currently being educated there and generations to come will enjoy learning in this iconic building."

● A TEAM of volunteers had Christmas all wrapped up at Waterstone's book shop.

For they provided a gift wrapping service to raise money for Maggie's Cancer Caring.

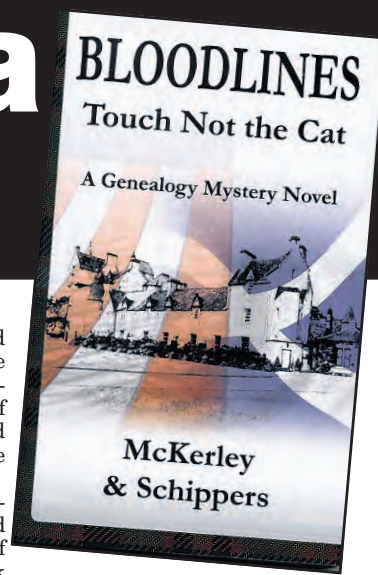
Hilda McGregor and her team were at the store until Christmas eve and were more than willing to turn their hands to wrapping even the most difficult of gifts in exchange for a donation.

Hilda said: "This was my third year at Waterstones, Ayr. With a team of enthusiastic volunteers and the support of the manageress Caron, and her staff in the store, we aimed to provide a gift wrapping service for all.

"I think the highlight of last year was the skateboard. We did say that we



could wrap most, things but drew the line at children, adults and animals. "The atmosphere is superb – probably a lot to do with the feel good factor – the giving and the receiving and knowing that everyone's efforts and generosity are going to raise funds for such a worthwhile cause."



Thanks from postie Jeff

AYR postman Jeff Scobie thanks everyone who chipped in for the £3000 he raised in a charity bike run.

Jeff did the run to mark his 40th birthday, and as a tribute to his late dad Ian.

Around £600 of the total was raised on the night of his 40th birthday.

Three charities each receive £1000 from Jeff's run to Castle Douglas, done with friend Michael Cooper.

They are: Cancer Research UK, the Ayrshire Hospice and the Children's Liver Disease Foundation.

Jeff said: "I'm deeply appreciative for all the support and for people's incredible generosity."

The Ayrshire Post adds its congratulations to Jeff, and is happy to correct the impression we gave in an earlier report that Georgia Scobie is his sister, when she is actually his cousin.

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