

Rev William McGhie



Biographical Notes

William McGhie was born on 23 November 1914 at 539 Edinburgh Road, Camlachie in Glasgow. His other childhood homes were 611 Shettleston Road and 40 Braidfauld Street in Tollcross.

He attended Eastbank Academy, Shettleston, Glasgow where he was both a prefect and the school captain. He played for the school football team and was selected to play for Scotland schools v England schools but did not play as he was ill. He also won a medal for hurdling.

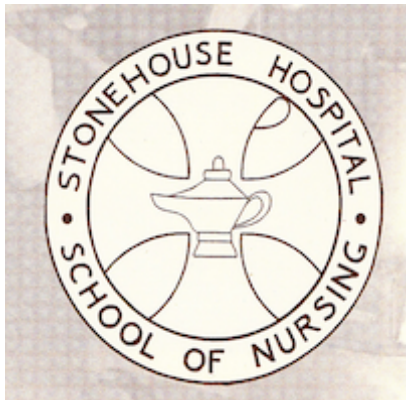
He attended Glasgow University and Trinity College. While a student he was a member of the Home Guard and served six months with the Church of Scotland huts in Orkney.

He qualified as a minister on 24 October 1942 which was also the day he got married. He volunteered as an Army Chaplain and was called up two months later.

He was ranked as a Captain and served as a chaplain in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Aden, India, Ceylon and Burma. He was minister of the Scots Kirk in Rangoon - Lord Mountbatten was a regular attender. He frequently broadcast from Radio S.E.A.C. later known as Burma Broadcasting Service. He presented a weekly feature which was an entertainment round-up of Rangoon. Later he also did religious broadcasting both in Scotland and in Jamaica.

He served with the Highland Light Infantry, the Canadian Army and with the Combined Operations in the Middle and Far East. He also trained with the Commandos.

After the war he was the minister of West Church, Buckie, Banffshire, where he was also chaplain to the Fishing Fleet and traveled with the fishermen to Great Yarmouth.



Next he was minister at St Ninians Church, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire. He was the chaplain at Stonehouse Hospital and it is interesting to note that he helped to design the logo for the Stonehouse Hospital School of Nursing. Here is good evidence that he was interested in design before his involvement with the Jamaican flag.

He went to Jamaica as a missionary in 1957 and helped others to establish and build Meadowbrook High School, Kingston, Jamaica which opened in 1958 with 25 pupils. When Meadowbrook was being formed he attended the University of the West Indies in Kingston to obtain a teaching diploma so that he could help out as a teacher in the school. He was awarded his Diploma in Education by Princess Alice. He was acting headmaster for a brief period. He taught religious education, history, and French. His wife Ailsa McGhie was the school bursar.



Eastbank Academy

Meadowbrook High School

He chose the school badge. This was a copy of his own school's badge from Eastbank Academy, Glasgow. He wrote to the school and received permission from the school authorities to use it. Both schools also share the same motto: Ita splendet lux vestra (Let your light so shine)



He chose the school colours: Black Watch tartan tunic for the girls and also tartan for the boys epaulettes worn on the shoulder as was the custom with all boys schools (ie wearing school colours on their shoulders)



Staff at Meadowbrook High School 1958. Back Row (L-R) Mr Adams, ??, Rev McGhie. Front Row (L-R) Miss McCartney, Miss Peterkin, Miss Gartshore (Headmistress), Miss McLellan, Mrs Ailsa McGhie (Bursar), Mrs Monica Smith (Head's Secretary)



5th year pupils 1958 (as remembered) Back Row (L-R) Juanita Escophery, Orville Miller, Trevor Pollock, Pat Lennox, Rob McGhie, Constance Blackwood. Middle Row (we can't remember any names) Front Row (L-R) Winsome Barrett, ?, Rev McGhie, Miss Gartshore (Headmistress), ?, Juanita William

McGhie and the Jamaican Flag



Prior to Jamaican Independence on 6 August 1962 McGhie had got to know the Jamaican Prime Minister Sir Alexander Bustamante. As the time of independence in 1962 approached, an initial design for the flag with three horizontal stripes in green, black and gold was

deemed unsatisfactory. McGhie suggested that as a Christian country, the national flag should reflect this and have a cross in it. At Sir Alexander's request, he traced out the Scottish saltire and filled in the now well known colours of Jamaica - green, black and gold. He gave this illustration to Sir Alexander who passed it on to the appropriate committee for further development and final approval as the official flag of Jamaica.

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The two churches he was minister of at while in Kingston were Webster Memorial Presbyterian Church and Meadowbrook Presbyterian Church. He established the latter in 1959 which met initially in Meadowbrook High School before securing its own building in 1965. It is now Meadowbrook United Church with a membership of over 700.

After Bustamante was replaced as Prime Minister by Michael Manley, his wife, who was an artist, gifted a large wooden engraving of the Burning Bush to McGhie to be displayed in Webster Memorial on the wall behind the Communion Table and it is there to this day.

McGhie regularly wrote articles about Jamaican news and sent it back to Scotland for publication in the newspapers.

He had a deep love for Jamaica and its people and was sad when he had to return to Scotland for family reasons.

He also wrote stories which were broadcast on BBC Radio, two of these being the children's story **Rosalie** and another by the name of **The Red Shoes**.

He was editor of the '**Presbyterian**' magazine for several years but the publication folded shortly after he returned home.

His final charge back in Scotland was at Chalmers Church, Uddingston, Lanarkshire.

He died in 1968.