

In Memory of Mollie McCabe

29 December 1922 - 6 July 2010

Mary Anne Donnelly Macklin was born on the 29th December 1922. She was the youngest of seven, 5 girls and 2 boys. She sometimes felt like an only child as there was a big age gap between her and her siblings and when she was at school the others were all already at work. Mollie attended Falkirk High School. She enjoyed school, particularly music, games and drama and loved playing hockey where she played centre forward and captained the first eleven for two years.



"George McCabe and Mollie McCabe on their honeymoon in the Lake District"

Her family were very involved in the church and Mollie joined the choir and became a Sunday school teacher. Music was always to be a big part of her life. She became an accomplished pianist and a choir member in the various churches of her husband George's ministry.

A turning point in her young life was listening to a missionary give a talk on his work in West Africa. She was thrilled by the slides and when the missionary said to the congregation: 'there may be one person in the church tonight who would be willing to dedicate his or her life to working overseas'. Mollie said to herself 'I am going to be that one'.

The war years turned everyone's lives upside down. Five boys in Mollie's class died flying Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. Girls were conscripted at the age of 18 to do service and Mollie joined the Ancillary Fire Service in which she served for five years. All thoughts of missionary work overseas were put on hold.

After the war years, Mollie worked in the Civil Service as Personal Assistant to Sir Andrew Davidson, the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland. One of the projects he was involved in was to build a large new hospital. Mollie remembered clearly, recording all the material and finally a Dundee site was found at a place called 'Ninewells'. Her grand-daughter Lucy many years later was to be born there.

Her promise as a child to go to the mission field kept nagging at her and she applied to the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. Her aim was to go to Africa but a meeting with George McCabe changed everything.

When they met, George was preparing to return to India, to follow in his parents footsteps as a missionary in his own right. As part of his training, George was an itinerant preacher, and a local minister asked Mollie's mother if George could live with them. The Macklin household was used to giving hospitality to visiting preachers so he was welcomed warmly by Mollie's parents. Not so by Mollie it seems, she recalled being fed up with ministers, preachers and faith mission pilgrims staying in their home. She said to her mother 'the next time a preacher comes to live here, I am leaving home'. She arrived home from Edinburgh one Friday evening to find a young man in their sitting room. Her mother introduced him to Mollie, saying that he needed hospitality and his parents were in India. **'Another preacher'!** Mollie kept her word and left home.....**with George!**

George and his brother Andrew came to London to study at All Nations Bible College and Mollie was able to transfer to a London Civil service post to be with them. George was then appointed Farm and Estate manager at Dr Graham's Homes in Kalimpong and he and Mollie married on 1st October 1949 and sailed to India three weeks later. The eight years they spent in India were to become the defining years of Mollie's life. George and Mollie were a young couple in their element and friendships made during this time remained for the rest of their lives. Today, the connection continues, with Mollie's sponsorship of boys at the homes, which Alistair and Anne intend to continue.

After India, Mollie became fully involved in her role as minister's wife. She chaired guilds and young wives groups, sang in the choir, played the piano, organised garden parties and somehow coped with a house constantly full of the latest church youth group.

As a mother, she cared for Alistair and Anne and also taught Business studies throughout her married life in various schools and colleges.

Their retirement years as a couple were short as George sadly died at the age of 67, but during those years because of the newly formed 'McCabe Travel' the couple were to return to India several times leading groups of McCabe traveller's which gave them great pleasure.

Following the death of George, Mollie moved to Morningside where she became a member of Greenbank and renewed a friendship with the minister Ian Scott and his wife Sandra – a friendship dating back from the early years in George and Ian's ministries. It is fitting that Ian should be conducting the funeral service today.

The last years of her life were spent in Wilmslow with Anne, Matthew and Lucy where she was able to help Anne combine the pressures of work and being a mother. She never lost her love of travel and in her last years visited India for at least three "last times" and also attended an Israeli wedding in Tel Aviv. She was constantly on the road to Edinburgh, where she retained her membership at Greenbank, staying with Ursula Macleod in her adopted second home. Summers were spent on the island of Colonsay with Alistair and his family. George never met Alistair's family but a highlight of Mollie's visits to London was afternoon tea in Harrods, with Lynne. Birthdays were never forgotten and Christmas as a family was a must.

Mollie was bright and cheerful to the end. She retained her quick wit and enriched everyone's lives with her wealth of stories and jokes – mostly about India and mostly heard before but always told as if for the first time.

Her passing was unexpected but peaceful. She was with her adored grand-daughter, Lucy, and in her own home. For that we are grateful.

She will be greatly missed by all of us.

McCabe Pilgrimages will be making a donation to Dr Graham's Homes in Kalimpong in Mollie's memory. Any donations from family and friends will be added to this.



"Mollie McCabe at home with her pet dog, Skye"