



# The Tattler



Summer 2021 Edition

## Words From The President

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of North America

Affiliated with the Robert Burns  
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Hi everyone,

I hope this finds you all safe and well. I am now a year into the RBANA Presidency, and hasn't the world changed a wee bit to say the least! The board has been meeting on a regular basis this year by Zoom technology, and although not the best method of communication, it has helped us keep RBANA functioning and current as best we can. I thank all the board members for their participation and collaboration over the year. Also, I would like to thank the members who managed to attend the members meeting on November 2020, and the recent AGM last month. The board needs your support, and it's our wish to keep connected to you in the coming year also, at least to keep us all from going 'stir crazy'!

We had a 'Major' change in the board (excuse my pun!) where we said goodbye to Major Andy Harrower who made the difficult decision to leave Canada and return to his native land of Scotland, we wish him all the absolute best in his new chapter of life. This left an opening for a Regional Director Canada East, and we are grateful that Ronnie O'Byrne volunteered and look forward to working with him in the coming year.

At the AGM, the members agreed to some changes to the By-laws and have had further opportunity to review post-meeting, which the board will finally discuss and should be signed up and disseminated to all members by end of July.

Also, at the AGM it was agreed to move forward with the President Chain of Office change, and the old one will be framed and retained in a facility for future display to interested parties. Where that will be has still to be decided.

The board will host another members meeting towards the end of the year to ad-



### In This Issue:

President's Message ...	1
Hume Poetry Competition .....	2
RBANA Virtual AGM .....	3
Academy of Speakers.....	4
Virtual Whisky Tasting .....	5
New Medicine Hat President .....	5
Carron Iron Works .....	6
Lochlea Distillery.....	7
Maria Riddell .....	8

## Cairney' Corner (continued)

wise on where we are with Conference for 2021, watch this space!  
Again, I close with wishing you all to keep safe and well with your families. Another quote from Robert Burns 'Address To The Deil' verse 4, which is very appropriate to our Pandemic cause, Covid-19:

*Whiles, ranging like a roarin lion,  
For prey, a' holes and corners tryin;  
Whiles, on the strong-wind'd tempest flyin,  
Tirlin the kirks;  
Whiles, in the human bosom pryin,  
Unseen thou lurks.*

Best regards and yours in Burns,

Henry Cairney  
RBANA President

## Hume Winners Announced

The results of the 2021 Jack Hume poetry competition are in!  
There were 7 entries from both the USA and Canada. The judges advised that it was extremely difficult to pick a clear winner and in the end there was only a single point difference in the top three. RBANA would like to congratulate all who entered the competition and to advise that the quality was very high! But their final results were:

**1st Twenty Twenty (Jim Fletcher)**  
**2nd A Golfers Tale (Ronnie O'Byrne)**  
**3rd Address Tae The Trifle (Henry Cairney)**



All entries are published in the accompanying Hume Supplement.

## RBANA Holds AGM Via Zoom

The RBANA AGM was held on the afternoon of 5<sup>th</sup> June 2021 with 23 members attending.

President Henry Cairney opened the meeting, and the first order of business was for approval by those members attending to continue with a Zoom online meeting instead of the

normal 'face to face', held at the annual conference. The approval was given, and the meeting continued.

After the agenda was approved, a moments silence was observed for absent friends who had passed in the last year. After the National Anthems of Canada, USA and UK were played, Mark Ferguson gave a reading from The Works of Robert Burns.

Approval for the minutes from both the 2019 AGM in Niagara Falls, and the online Zoom Members meeting were given. Mathew Hill the Secretary/Treasurer read the correspondence, announcements and then presented the Treasurer's report, showing a favourable bank balance.

There ensued a general discussion with the proposed changes to the Bylaws and the process for gaining approval by membership prior to signing which was passed by the meeting.

There was a discussion on the creation of

a joint membership with the RBWF with the benefit of a reduced cost if members wish, the individual membership for both organizations would remain for those who

only want one only. Discussions will continue through Mark Ferguson who is a member of the RBWF Membership Committee.

A debate took place regarding the repository for the current Pres-

idents Chain of Office which is being replaced soon. It was passed that no individual member would retain it, and a location would be identified in the future. Thanks to Ken Montgomery for his work in the design of the new one.

Further discussions took place on the RBWF Conference in September where Henry Cairney will take up the post of President, and the Lord Lyon will present the new Coat of Arms for Robert Burns at that conference. A motion to donate to that appeal was passed.

Further discussions on how to increase membership of RBANA, and on potential Conference venues in future years.

Paul Kennedy gave a second reading from The Works of Robert Burns prior to adjournment.



Submitted by  
Henry Cairney, RBANA President



## The RBANA Academy of Speakers

**A**t various times many Burns clubs and related organizations host a Burns dinner or related event and want to bring in a proper speaker to present the Immortal Memory or offer another related presentation.

On occasion we at RBANA would be asked, who do you recommend, or is this person competent and qualified? This led to consideration whereby RBANA would identify and acknowledge certain people who were so qualified. To properly do this it was decided to establish the RBANA Academy of Speakers.

In our Constitution & Bylaws that effort was formalized 25 April 2020, and is detailed in Article IX, which reads in part;

### ARTICLE IX – THE RBANA ACADEMY OF SPEAKERS

1 RBANA shall establish, promote and maintain a list of qualified speakers on the subject of Robert Burn's related topics. That group of individuals shall be called the **RBANA ACADEMY OF SPEAKERS**, also known as the **ACADEMY**, and will be a group of individuals, being no more than thirty-seven (37) persons, who in the opinion of the Executive Officers, and after proper inquiries and due consideration, are elected and appointed by the Board.

2 The purpose of the **ACADEMY** will be to:

(a) Promote and encourage the art and craft of writing, preparing and delivering talks, speeches on the life and works of Robert Burns and related topics; and

(b) Encourage people to become speakers through involvement in the above activities and through specific encouragement.

3 Membership of the **ACADEMY** shall be by invitation or by application that is done through completion of an application form accompanied by that person's biography and resume.

After due consideration and discussion I am pleased to announce that RBANA has identified its first five worthy members, those being, Jane Brown, Ronnie O'Byrne, Henry Cairney, Andy Harrower CD and Les Strachan. Photos and biographies on each of these well known and respected Burnsians will be detailed on our website.

The standards set for these appointments is indeed high, and that being said if any members knows of any person they consider worthy and properly experienced, to submit their names to the Board for consideration.

Each member of the RBANA Academy of Speakers is also allowed to use the above seal or badge.

Submitted by Ken Montgomery, Past President

## Medicine Hat Burns Club Benriach Virtual Scotch Tasting

The MHBC, not one to let COVID get us down, welcomed a proposal by its Scotch Steward, Blake Shaw to host a Virtual Scotch tasting. The effort to do this was fairly straightforward. Blake had been in contact with the representative of the Benriach Scotch Distillery and learned they were able to provide sample kits (as above) that would contain four vials of four different types of Benriach Scotch. Where the Scotch would normally have been purchased by the Club, in this case it was donated by Blake's business, Trakside Liquor.

We had enough Scotch to involve about 16 participants. Attendees were identified and each was provided a sample kit that in a few cases had to be mailed out. Here I note that with various provincial and state liquor laws this type of effort has to be done within the boundaries of an involved province or state to be legal. Each sample was about 1 ½ ounces.

When everything was lined up and our guest list finished we set a date for this big event, that date being Tuesday, 25 May 2021 at 7:00 pm. Henry Cairney acted as our Club Zoom Coordinator and our special guests included our new president Andy Cowan, Joe



Marshall, representing the Edmonton Burns Club, Mike Duffy representing the Lethbridge Jolly Beggars and Brian Cummins, the newly elected president of the Calgary Burns Club.

The four Scotches were sampled along with various suggested pairings and then judged. Of interest, the winner was the Benriach, Peated Port Cask.

It was a great evening that we intend to do again, especially as we can involve others not living in Medicine Hat and representatives of other Clubs. If you would like more information on how to host such an event, please contact me at [monty855@shaw.ca](mailto:monty855@shaw.ca).

## Introducing Andy Cowan

The Medicine Hat Burns Club is pleased to announce and identify its newest president, Andy Cowan who officially took over 17 April 2021.

Andy was born at Irvine, Scotland and enlisted in the British Army joining the Royal Engineers (RE) in 1982. After basic and additional engineer related training he was first posted to Germany. Returning to the UK in 1987, he was then posted to Maidstone and Ripon and would serve operational tours in Northern Ireland, the Falkland Islands and Canada (BATUS).

In 1997 Andy assumed an appointment as a Trade Instructor at the Royal School of Military Engineer-

ing, later became a Resources Specialist and then a supervisor/instructor. He retired as a Warrant Officer Class 2 and then after one day of retirement returned to instruct the TA (Reserves), finally retiring in 2007.

A keen Burnsian, Andy is married to Andrea for 33 years and has one son, Ben. He currently is employed with Safety Connections teaching all Health and Safety Courses for the Energy/Construction industry.

Andy's first official duty was to present outgoing President Andy Harrower with his MHBC Past President's medal. His second official duty was to announce that the Scotch blend 'Timourous Beastie' was now the Club's second official blend with Monkey Shoulder still being the first.



Submitted by Ken Montgomery, Past President



## Carron Iron Works: Plaque Marking Robert Burns' Visit Repaired and Restored

A plaque to remember Robert Burns' visit to Carron Iron Works has been repaired and put back in place - for the fourth time - following vandalism.

Local area councillor Robert Bissett organised the repair - and he hopes it is just the start of making the historic area at the clock-tower look better after years of neglect.

Provost Billy Buchanan thanked Mr Bissett and said he had message for the vandals: "The fact that one of the world's greatest poets visited one of the world's most famous works is a major event in Falkirk's local history, so leave it alone!"

Mr. Bissett, who is also chairman of the heritage group Falkirk Made Friends, said repairing the plaque was just the start of his plans to get the historic clocktower area tidied up.

It houses two of the famous Carronades but the area has been rundown and neglected.

He said: "The Tower and the works area have

now transferred ownership so I and a couple of members of Falkirk Made Friends are keen to meet with the new owner.

"First of all, we would like to be allowed access to tidy up the area where the Carronades are.

"It would be great to see this iconic clock tower

and the gates to Carron - which Rabbie was not allowed through - renovated back to their former glory.

"Carron Company was known world-wide and we need to preserve that heritage."

Falkirk Made Friends is currently developing an Iron Heritage Trail and Councilor Bis-

sett explained that there are two pieces of metal inserted to the left and right of the main gate that would deserve a place on that trail.

"The one on the left is a section of one of the first the James Watt boilers and the one on the right is the first metal cast at Carron Works," he said.

"We wish to work with the new owner and Falkirk Council to preserve the tower and gates and hopefully get the clock working again."



## Lochlea Distillery: Farm Where Robert Burns Lived Set To Bottle First Whisky

Seven years in the making, a new £6 million distillery on the farm where Robert Burns lived and worked is closed to start bottling its first whisky. Planning started on Lochlea Distillery in 2014, but liquid production did not begin until August 2018, with the first casks filled and laid down in an on-site warehouse.

The site remains a working farm where the barley is grown nearly 250 years after Scotland's national poet was tending the same land.

Burns was 18 when he moved to Lochlea Farm in 1777, and worked there until 1784.

David Ferguson, Lochlea Whisky's commercial manager and an Ayrshire native, said: "Lochlea Whisky will carve out its own unique place in the industry.

"The new-make spirit is bursting with orchard fruit and has a beautiful elegance way beyond its years.

"Burns is known for his honest, passionate and pro-

gressive nature and this has inspired some of Lochlea Distillery's core values."



The Lochlea Distillery team has been working on creating a truly distinct whisky under the watchful eye of distillery manager and industry authority, Malcolm Rennie.

With 34 years in the whisky industry, Malcolm cut his teeth on Kilchoman,

Bruichladdich and Ardbeg

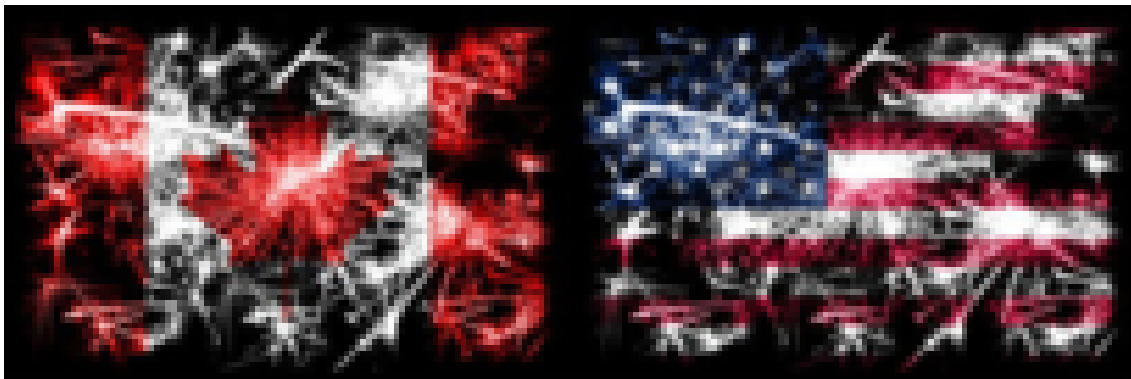
but sees Lochlea Whisky as the result of his life's work.

He said: "Ensuring full traceability from field to cask is vital for us.

"We grow and harvest our own barley on Lochlea farm, with the resulting draff used to feed local cattle and the water is sourced on site.

"We've been able to take advantage of Ayrshire's natural resources and in doing so it keeps our carbon footprint to a minimum."

The first bottling is expected in late this year.



# The Fascinating, Adventurous, Capricious, Talented Mrs. Riddell

## Editors Note:

In December 2012, RBANA Member Eileen McKoy presented a talk to the Robert Burns Club of San Diego on the life of Maria Banks Woodley Riddell, “the most intelligent and understanding woman with whom Robert Burns ever formed a friendship”  
She has graciously allowed us to publish that presentation for Tattler readers.

About four years ago, I first became fascinated by Maria Riddell, born 1772, and dear friend of Robert Burns, when I discovered that she had travelled to Saint Christopher-Nevis (aka St. Kitts) as the daughter of William Woodley, the Governor of the Leeward Islands, British West Indies, from 1766 to 1771. Maria's connection to St. Kitts piqued my interest because my husband was born there. At the age of sixteen she sailed from England with her parents to their home in St. Kitts. On the way the ship stopped in at Madeira for sightseeing and socializing, was threatened by an Arab corsair, and also hit a coral rock. Fortunately she did not suffer the same fate as Helen Gloag, a Scotswoman who was captured by Barbary pirates and imprisoned in a harem, becoming Empress of Morocco (but that's another story!). Quite an eventful journey. This was to be a brief visit followed by a return trip to the West Indies in 1790.

I was very impressed that at such a tender age Maria wrote a book entitled *Voyages to the Madeira and Leeward Caribbean Isles with Sketches of the Natural History of these Islands*. It begins with a description of life and the people in Madeira and continues with an account of the voyage. Maria goes on to describe the people, geography and flora and fauna of St. Kitts, Antigua and Barbuda, using the zoological classifications of Mr. Pennant and the botanical classifications of Linnaeus - seems remarkable to me that one so young would be familiar with these classifications. The original book was published in Edinburgh in 1792 as a result of Burns' introduction of



Credit: Kingston Lacy, The Barkes Collection (National Trust)

Maria to William Smellie, the Edinburgh printer. His letter of introduction abundantly shows how truly the Poet had grasped the outstanding qualities of her character. The letter commences, “I sit down, my dear Sir, to introduce a young lady to you, and a lady in the first rank of fashion.” Smellie was much taken with Maria and wrote, “When I consider your youth and still more your sex, the perusal of your ingenious and judicious work, if I had not previously had the pleasure of your conversation, the devil himself could have frightened me into the belief that a female human creature could, in the bloom of youth, beauty, and consequently giddiness, have produced a performance so much out of the line of young ladies' works...Science, minute observation, and excellent composition are qualities seldom to be met with in the female world.”

Maria's next venture into print with Smellie was her *The Metrical Miscellany consisting chiefly of poems hitherto unpublished*, published in 1802. Maria edited this book and included around 20 of her own poems.

Smellie and Maria remained lifelong friends and exchanged many letters. When Smellie suggested that she should record her observations when abroad on “that strange creature Man”, rather than on plants and minerals”, she replied:

I need not go abroad for observations of that nature as I find ample scope for them here, and am disgusted with the perspective. There is but one animal I think more inconsistent, more fickle, less to be trusted, and with a lesser remaining impress of the Creator's stamp about it than Man - I mean Woman.

Maria did not have many women friends!

By any standard, quite a remarkable young woman for her time. Yet it is not for these literary accomplishments that Maria is best known, but for her deep friendship with Robert Burns, the last person with whom he had meaningful conversations before his death.

Maria met Burns when she was a married woman of 19 and he was 32. Her husband was a Scot, Walter Riddell, 8 years her senior. His first wife, an heiress to an Antigua estate died in 1786 after one year of marriage leaving him her fortune. In 1790 Walter



## MARIA RIDDELL continued

met Maria in Antigua and married her in St. Kitts. From his portrait he looks like a handsome man and perhaps he swept the young Maria off her feet. But, he turned out to be dissolute and a wastrel, eventually losing his fortune. How sad for his starry-eyed bride. They had two daughters born 1791 and 1792 in London then moved to near Dumfries, Scotland, staying the first few months at Friars

Carse, the home of Walter's brother Robert. It was there that Maria probably first met Robert Burns and they would have made an instant connection with her beauty, intellect and flirtatious ways and his dynamic personality that never failed to draw women to his side. Maria and Walter later procured their own home at Goldielea and renamed it Woodley Park in honor of her father. Friars Carse is now a hotel and Woodley Park is a nursing home.

Fellow antiquarian and musicians, a strong friendship had grown between Captain Robert Riddell and Robert Burns. Burns often visited Friars Carse and was given use of the Hermitage there as a quiet study for his writing. Consequently he had many opportunities to enjoy Maria's company and exchange letters and poems with her, especially since her husband was in the West Indies from 1793 to 1794. During that period, while socializing with the Riddell family, an episode occurred nicknamed "The Rape of the Sabine Women" when Burns became inebriated upon the encouragement of his host and hoodwinked into taking part in a mock sexual attack on his hostess, covering her face and neck with kisses. It has been debated as to whether it was Elizabeth Riddell, wife of Robert Riddell, or Maria that he offended or whether the event took place at Friars Carse or Woodley Park. Gladstone opines that since in his letter of apology to Elizabeth, Burns refers to the presence and goading of the hostess's husband it is debatable whether Maria was the lady affronted, since her husband was at the time in Antigua. On



the other hand, Wood is of the belief that the incident occurred at Woodley Park, that the lady molested was Maria, and that her husband was indeed present. Each author offers proof of his conclusion and I offer no opinion of my own.

Whatever happened, Maria was offended on behalf of her family and cold shouldered Burns, despite his abject apology. Sadly, within the year Robert Riddell had died without reconciling with Burns. Burns wrote a sonnet reflecting how deeply he felt the loss of a man he truly loved, but then turned on Maria most maliciously. He wrote several insulting verses of which the first attack was an epigram addressed to her carriage:

If you rattle along like your Mistress's tongue,  
Your speed will outrival the dart:

But, a fly for your load, you'll break down on the road,

If your stuff be as rotten as her heart.

However much one may appreciate the genius of the Poet, one must always regret his unmannerly conduct towards this lady who had been his friend, and whose patronage he had only lost on account of his rudeness to one of her family.

But Maria was tenderhearted. Thus, in 1795, her anger at Burns cooled and the broken friendship was gradually renewed. She lent him a book and gave him a song of her own composition referring to the river Nith which included the lines :

For there he roved that broke my heart  
Yet to that heart, ah, still how dear!

And

The flowers of spring, how gay they  
bloomed When last with him I wandered  
here!

Burns responded most agreeably, flirtatious and flattering. He lent Maria his portrait in miniature by Alexander Reid. They were to remain friends for the rest of his life but sadly by 1796 his health was broken. They would meet for the last time at Brow where he had been ordered by his doctor to see what benefit he could derive from sea-bathing. The interview must have been a painful one; the sick

## Maria Riddell continued

man, so Maria states, greeted her with: "Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?" They talked about his legacy and his regrets at writing epigrams on persons against whom he entertained no enmity, and whose characters he would be sorry to wound. They met twice on July 5 and 6, 1796 for the last time. The poet was brought back to his own house in Dumfries, where he died on July 21st.

Maria had suffered severely from Burns merciless past effusions. However 5 days after his funeral she went by night to plant laurels on his grave. Revised several times, her long epitaph to Burns is a must-read for insight into the man that was Robert Burns. To her lasting credit no contemporary Burns' critic gave a more discerning or impartial essay on his character. We all know of Burns' character flaws as well as his humanity, but Maria explained that he was candid and manly in the avowal of his errors. Maria was very instrumental in raising funds for the care of Jean Burns and her family and tried to help raise funds for his monument. She provided much original material to James Currie, Burns' first biographer, (right) and chivvied him to produce it in a timely fashion. Maria helped criticize the work and in one of her first letters to Dr. Currie she asked, "What do you mean by desiring *me* to correct *any* thing of Burns? 'Tis asking me to paint the lily and add perfume to the violet." She obtained many subscribers to the work, often as a result of her personal charm and tenacity in collecting payment. She told Currie "I think if we got the Prince of Wales's name, for instance - I mean by way of ornament, for he will never pay the money". She was of great assistance to Dr. Currie and encouraged him greatly telling him we are all extremely joyful when the date of publication was announced. Many of their letters to each other have been preserved.

A cultured lady who took delight in her harp, her piano, her poetry, and classical reading, Maria kept a diary. However it has been so mutilated that it is impossible to say whether or not she kept any record of her acquaintance of the Poet. And, who can say who tore the pages from the diary - probably her daughter. Their poems and letters are the testimony we have of their affection for each other.

Woodley Park had to be given up for lack of funds and Maria lived at Tinwald House rented from the Duke of Queensberry while Walter was in London.

She referred to it as worm eaten and leaky. She could not wait to move with Walter to Halleaths, a mansion house near Lockerbie.

Walter died in 1802 aged 38 in Antigua but was buried there in St. Paul's Churchyard, Falmouth. Maria spent the remainder of her life mostly in Dorset and



London. Maria met many leading figures in society, such as King George III and Queen Charlotte, the Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of Gordon. Intelligent, beautiful, and widely read in four languages, she cultivated men of unquestionable genius, such as William Spencer, Charles Fox, Sir Thomas Law-

rence, Richard Sheridan. Other literati who frequented her soirees included Sir James Mackintosh, Samuel Rogers, and Richard Sharp. In 1807 she met Sir Walter Scott and afterwards sent him some of Burns' broadsheet ballads with a complimentary letter to our "latest Minstrel". In fact, Maria was so well educated as to be considered for the post of teacher to the Princess Charlotte, the only daughter of the Prince of Wales.

Pursued and cultivated by Maria, an admirer of special note was Henry Fuseli, famous artist and poet of his day, whom she compared to Burns. Fuseli's "Lament for Maria" (1809) was probably written in response to her death. Intrigued by their relationship, in the course of my researches on Maria I was, at first, unable to discover Fuseli's poem; until I happened upon the name of the author, Professor Emeritus David Weinglass of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, who has a scholarly passion for Fuseli. He had written an article for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1978, entitled "The Painter's Muse: Henry Fuseli and Maria Riddell". I contacted Professor Weinglass by letter and he and his wife most generously phoned me and immediately sent me a copy of the article with the poem and other information on Fuseli and Maria. To quote just one verse of the Lament:

To Maria the stripling paid his homage;  
And the youth in the bloom of young desire;  
To her the grown man knelt in his pride;  
Her the old man recalled and sighed sadly!

Professor Weinglass suggested that Maria would have been pronounced Marla and I have had to re-teach myself to call her that rather than Mareea. In his article the Professor believes that there is, after all, another image of Maria, presented in Fuseli's *The Poet's Vision* where she is depicted as the Muse of

## Maria Riddell continued

Poetry hovering over the poet William Cowper. Professor Weinglass's work has opened up for me a whole new aspect of Maria's life and a round of more book purchasing.

Described in glowing terms by her admirers, only one man wrote an unflattering account of Maria. This was Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, a Scot and contemporary of Maria's. One of his many insults was to call her a pickled frog. His scurrilous note was not discovered and published until 1903 and was patently spiteful revenge for some unknown reason. In a letter Maria wrote how she missed Scotland and its bold energy of landscape, the singular, romantic and almost unique aspect of its mountains, glens and moorlands. All her letters were intelligent and well written. In one she said she had laid Burns' maxim to her bosom and vowed solemnly never again to tell a friend that he has a fault.

In March 1808, when she was 36 and he was 26, Maria married Colonel Phillipps Lloyd Fletcher from Flintshire, a young officer of Dragoons. She had been living at Hampton Court, where she probably stayed with her relative, Lady Lavington, who had been granted apartments by the Crown in Hampton Court Palace in consideration of Lord Lavington's distinguished service. At the time of her marriage, Thomas Mathias, author and friend of Sir Walter Scott, was in love with Maria. She subsequently lived at 24 Carlyle Square, London with her new husband. Sadly, the marriage was short - Maria died in December of the same year, possibly from Graves' Disease, a type of goitre in which the eyes protrude. Her will was most touchingly and fairly divided be-

tween her surviving daughter and her husband, indicative that it was a happy marriage. Her lovely original portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence painted in 1806 can be seen at Kingston Lacy in Dorset, the home of her sister and her husband. In her will Maria asked her daughter that the Lawrence painting be copied by the best miniaturist that London affords, and that it Zbe given to "my good Fletcher. A portable resemblance will be more acceptable to him I conceive than an oil painting" (presumably because he was a military man). Fletcher outlived her by 55 years and never remarried. They were both buried in Overton-on-Dee Churchyard.

I must acknowledge my source material which includes books by David H. Weinglass, Angus McNaughton (a descendant of Maria's), Hilton Brown, Hugh Gladstone, Delancey Ferguson, Maxwell Wood, Colin Hunter McQueen and the words of Maria herself. Maria will always hold a place in my heart. My research for this talk has precipitated a whole new round of book buying and I am learning more and more about dear Maria.

I will end by quoting Burns' complimentary epigram on Maria Riddell:

"Praise Woman still," his lordship roars,  
Deserv'd or not, no matter?  
But thee, whom all my soul adores,  
Ev'n Flattery cannot flatter:

Maria, all my thought and dream,  
Inspires my vocal shell;  
The more I praise my lovely theme,  
The more the truth I tell

Submitted by Eileen McKory