



*1 – Maria Taylor, SELF-PORTRAIT HOLDING A DRAWING
c.1815, pencil and wash on paper, 16 x 13 cm (courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)*

A regency artist in Ireland: Maria Spilsbury Taylor (1776-1820)

CHARLOTTE YELDHAM

THIS ARTICLE IS PRIMARILY AN ACCOUNT OF MARIA SPILSBURY TAYLOR'S LIFE and work in Ireland and her association with the Tighe family of county Wicklow and county Kilkenny. It also provides an opportunity to dispel some biographical confusion.

From Samuel Redgrave (*A Dictionary of Artists of the English School*, 1874) and Ellen C. Clayton (*English Female Artists*, 1876) onwards, facts such as the dates of her birth, marriage and death, the identity of her father, the nature of her religious upbringing, as well as the dates of her visits to Ireland and the background to her family's connection with this country, have been mistakenly or inadequately represented.¹ Even her great-granddaughter and principal biographer, Ruth Young, who had access to family letters which have since disappeared, may not be relied on in every detail.

Born at 68 Great Ormond Street, London, on 28 October 1776, Maria Spilsbury (Plate 1) (as she was known before her marriage to John Taylor) was christened Rebecca Maria Ann on 13 February 1777 at St George the Martyr, Bloomsbury.² Her twin brother died at birth. She died in Dublin on 1 June 1820 at the age of 43, having spent the last six years of her life in Ireland, and was buried in the churchyard of the Church of St John the Baptist, Drumcondra, where her headstone still stands (Plate. 2).³

Any attempt to describe her life or appreciate her art has to consider her situation as the daughter and wife of profoundly religious people during a period of intense evangelical and missionary activity in England and Ireland. Her father, Jonathan Spilsbury (1737-1812) was a portrait painter and print-maker.⁴ He was also a member of the Moravian Church at Fetter Lane in London, and played an active role in the affiliated Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen.⁵ Her mother, Rebecca, née Chapman (1748-1812), although a member of the Established Church, had sought, and been refused, formal membership of the



2 – Maria Taylor’s grave in the churchyard of the Church of St John the Baptist, Drumcondra, Dublin (photo: the author)

Moravian Church, and, as an occasional participant at Lady Huntingdon’s chapels and as a close friend of the Wesleys, had an interest in Methodism also. Maria Spilsbury herself was brought up within the Moravian Church.⁶

Maria Spilsbury first visited Ireland with her parents at the age of twelve, and connections made then formed the basis for her later, longer stay in Ireland. On 7 February 1789 it was reported in the Elders Council Minutes of the Moravian Church in Fetter Lane in London: ‘Mrs Tye [*sic*] in Ireland has expressed a wish to have, if possible, a Br. (Brother), as a tutor to her sons, and a Sr. (Sister) to instruct her daughters in the French and Italian Languages.’⁷ Then on 9 May: ‘Br. and Sr. Spilsbury will according to an invitation recd from Mrs. Tigh in Ireland go thither on a visit of about 3 months. The Conf[er]en[ce] was afraid lest by leaving his business so long he might lose part of it, which would be peculiarly disadvantageous as their circumstances are not the most prosperous.’⁸ Sarah Tighe (1743-1822), of Woodstock, county Kilkenny, and of Rossana, county Wicklow, was the widow of William Tighe (1738-1782), and, like her husband, was a keen Methodist who welcomed visiting preachers and attended Lady Huntingdon’s chapel in Dublin.⁹ Jonathan Spilsbury had already met her at Harrow School where he was a drawing

master between 1785 and 1789. From 1781 to 1788, Mrs Tighe lived at the vicarage in Harrow to be near her son, Henry, who was a pupil at the school. In the holidays, when she occupied a house in Wimpole Street in London, she often met John Wesley.¹⁰ A portrait of the latter, which she commissioned from George Romney, was finished in February 1789 and subsequently engraved by Jonathan Spilsbury at the request of Wesley himself.¹¹ Like many Methodists, Mrs Tighe was also drawn to Moravianism. In 1788, at the instigation of her son William (at the time the member for Bannagher in the Irish Parliament), she had invited the Moravian Brethren to build a 'congregation manufacture' at Woodstock and preach the gospel to the poor, and although no permanent Moravian presence appears to have been established, Brother West did visit Woodstock and preach there in February and March 1789. She also repeatedly urged the Moravian Brethren to preach at Rossana.¹² Mrs Tighe was therefore known to the Moravian Elders in London, and Jonathan Spilsbury's earlier connection with her would have made him an obvious choice for the post.

The Spilsburys arrived at Rossana in May 1789 – Jonathan Spilsbury having been offered £300 a year (equivalent to his annual earnings in England) by Mrs Tighe – and became immediately involved in the Tighes' social life.¹³ The Tighes moved in prominent circles, Sarah Tighe's brother-in-law Edward Tighe being MP for Wicklow Borough. Sarah Tighe herself is said to have been a model landowner who was 'reckoned as one of the best agriculturalists in the country'.¹⁴ She was also involved in numerous charitable and educational initiatives. According to her daughter Caroline, her generosity to her family, friends, dependants and charitable causes was such that despite a nominal income of £4,000 a year, she was constantly in debt.¹⁵

On 3 June Rebecca Spilsbury wrote to her close friend Sarah Gwynne Wesley (wife of Charles Wesley and sister-in-law of John Wesley) in London, mentioning a two-day visit to Rossana by John Wesley who preached in Mrs Tighe's hall and at the Sessions House, and referring to 'public disputes and confusion'.¹⁶ In this and subsequent letters to the Wesleys, she described Rossana, the fine trees on its estate, and the pleasure-loving way of life there. The words 'romantic' and 'picturesque' recur frequently in reference to views. They visited cottages owned by Mrs Tighe and Mrs Henry Grattan in Irish jaunting cars, went sea-bathing and held concerts at which Maria – an accomplished keyboard player who had been instructed on the organ by Charles Wesley junior – performed to great acclaim. They hoped to move into a nearby house on the demesne, Mount Usher, which Mrs Tighe had secured for them. But although Rebecca appreciated the beauty of the place and the gaiety, she was disturbed by the extent of surrounding poverty; she was also troubled by Sarah Tighe's lack of economy and above all concerned by the effect of her children's 'desultory' attitude on Maria. The Moravian Church inculcated a strong work ethic which was reinforced at home by Maria's parents, aware that she might

have to earn her living. Rebecca wrote of the ‘powerful attractions’ Ireland held for her daughter and went on: ‘it is natural for young people to be fond of exercise in the open air but I think she is too fond of that kind of dissipation.’¹⁷ Rebecca was not alone in her reservation. Mary Blachford (Mrs Henry Tighe), Sarah Tighe’s niece and author of *Psyche*, referred in May 1789 to ‘the gaiety which reigns there, which inclines everyone to eat, and to drink and to rise up to play and to make the pleasures of the present moment their ruling passion’.¹⁸

Sarah Tighe devoted herself to her children’s education, and although an indulgent mother who believed in the outdoor prescriptions of Rousseau’s *Emile* (1762), spared no expense in the employment of tutors; even her daughters were given a learned education. Elizabeth (1774?-1857) and Caroline (1777-1861; christened Marianne Caroline) had a Swiss governess (a follower of Lady Huntingdon), a writing master and a music master from Dublin; Rebecca Spilsbury taught the piano and possibly French and Italian, and Jonathan Spilsbury, drawing. Caroline (an amateur artist with whose work Maria Spilsbury’s has sometimes been confused) described Jonathan Spilsbury’s methods of teaching his daughter as unique. He found prints of antique statues in the library and a book of skeletons, ‘and he made her draw outlines rapidly of all that had any grace or beauty allowing her to shade them only slightly and she acquired early such a facility in sketching graceful figures, that a few years afterwards it became as easy to her to sketch from her imagination as to most people to write.’¹⁹ There are early drawings by Maria Spilsbury in the National Gallery of Ireland.²⁰ The family and children’s tutors (including the Spilsburys) moved between Rossana and Woodstock, and Maria Spilsbury received the same education as the Tighe children.

The Spilsburys left Ireland on 8 May 1790 after almost a year with Mrs Tighe, and returned to No. 10 St George’s Row, overlooking Hyde Park, in London.²¹ The Elders Council Minutes of the Moravian Church at Fetter Lane recorded that both mother and daughter were unsettled after their return from Ireland, and in December 1791 Maria was excluded from the congregation.²² She was confirmed within the Established Church in 1795, but like her mother, continued to associate with Independent and specifically evangelical members of the clergy.²³ They would have kept in touch with the Tighes, and Maria could have met Elizabeth when the latter sat to Romney for her portrait in London between July and December 1793.²⁴

Maria began exhibiting at the Royal Academy in 1792, at the age of fifteen, and from 1806 exhibited at the British Institution also. Her portraits and genre subjects (often based on literary themes) were notable for their informality, and recall George Morland and Francis Wheatley, to whom her work has sometimes been wrongly attributed. Her religious themes suggest a response to Macklin’s Bible initiative. Spirits and angels in her work evoke William Blake who was acquainted

with her father, and also the work of Matthew William Peters. Her most ambitious and acclaimed paintings, however, were large crowd scenes such as *Christ Feeding the Multitude*, *The Second Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* (RA 1804), *The Return of the Spies from the Promised Land* (RA 1805), *The Fourth of June* (RA 1807), *The Holiday Feast* (BI 1807; Tudor House Museum, Southampton) and *The Royal Jubilee, as Celebrated at Great Malvern* (BI 1811), which measured 4ft 6in by 5ft 6in – paintings which displayed her skill in the grouping of figures, often in movement, and which, in their themes, reflected the unifying emotions of religious and patriotic commitment. Such subjects would have struck a chord in the public mind at a time when republican and supposedly atheistical France posed a constant threat, and when England was, partly responsively, in the grip of evangelical and missionary zeal. In one painting she referred directly to Moravian missionary activities – *A Missionary of the United Brethren Conversing with the Esquimeaux. Scene in the Terra Labrador, Month of June, with a Distant view of Nain* (RA 1807; copy by Mrs Hall in the National Archives of Canada). A secondary and related theme was education. She depicted school and Sunday school scenes, reflecting the increasingly active Sunday school movement and drawing perhaps on her father's experience as a teacher of children in the Moravian Church, and was aware of radical educational initiatives in Switzerland, possibly as a result of visiting her aunts – for example, in *Lodock Instructing Youth, with a View of a Part of the Lake of Zurich and the Town of Rappershwyl* (RA 1803 and BI 1808). This interest led later to an association with John Hatch Synge (sometimes referred to as 'Pestalozzi Synge' because of his interest in the Swiss educationalist's methods) in Ireland. Maria Spilsbury's reputation grew steadily during the first decade of the nineteenth century, and she soon acquired influential patrons, not least the Prince Regent.²⁵

On 3 November 1808, at the age of 32, she married John Taylor (1784-1821) of Southampton, who was eight years her junior, and went to live in Greenwich (Plate 3). John Taylor and his brother Thomas were running their father's blockworks in nearby Deptford.²⁶ An inventor like his father Walter Taylor (1734-1803), who had been a contractor to the Admiralty, father and son were also strongly evangelical, and the family house, Portswood, near Southampton, was frequented by many prominent evangelicals of the day, including William Wilberforce, John Newton and Rowland Hill. Walter Taylor was an original director of the London Missionary Society. By 1810 the blockworks at Deptford had closed, the Taylors having lost money, and John and Maria, with their first child Jonathan, had moved to No. 5 St. George's Row, close to Maria's parents. In 1812 her parents died, and a second child, Susanna Maria, was born. By February 1814 the Taylors had accepted an invitation from Sarah Tighe and moved with their two children to Ireland, where they stayed initially with Maria's childhood friend Elizabeth Tighe (Sarah Tighe's daughter) and her husband, the Revd Thomas Kelly (1769-1855) at Kellyville,



3 – Maria Taylor,
*JOHN TAYLOR, THE ARTIST'S
HUSBAND*

*c.1815, pencil, wash and
watercolour on paper, 17.5 x 15 cm
(courtesy National Gallery of
Ireland)*

Queen's County (county Laois).²⁷ This was partly for the sake of John Taylor's health. There may also have been financial reasons. For Maria, with no family ties to keep her in London, it was an opportunity to resume her friendship with the Tighe family, and perhaps, from an artistic point of view, to extend her range of subject matter. There was also, at least for John Taylor, a proselytising purpose.

The London Missionary Society, formed in 1795, created an extraordinary fervour among evangelicals in the Established and Independent Churches. Originally concerned with the conversion of the 'heathen' overseas, it soon inspired an interdenominational determination to spread the gospel closer to home – in England, and, following the Act of Union in 1800 which brought a greater awareness of Irish affairs, in Ireland also. An Evangelical Society had existed in Ireland since 1714, and Methodists had maintained a significant presence since John Wesley's first visit in 1747. In 1806 the Hibernian Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge in Ireland was founded, which, by 1815, ran 242 schools in Ireland. Over the next eight years at least nine other evangelical societies were created, including the Hibernian Sunday School Society (founded 1810), which, by 1815, had 236 schools in its connection.²⁸ Thomas Kelly had been a director of the

London Missionary Society and supported the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen.²⁹ An Independent minister and also a hymn-writer (John Taylor harmonised his hymns), he was well known as a focus for evangelical activity in the south of Ireland, and specifically for the setting up of Sunday schools.³⁰ It is probable that he and John Taylor were already acquainted. According to John William Augustus Taylor (John Taylor's youngest son), the Kellys were among his parents' closest friends in Ireland.³¹ Other evangelical connections were Thomas Gregg (1795-1846), Mrs Robert Morrison (wife of the first Protestant missionary to China), and Revd Benjamin Williams Mathias (1772-1841), chaplain of Bethesda Chapel and of the Lock Penitentiary, Dublin, and an active supporter of the missionary cause.³² Maria Taylor's portrait of Mathias, later engraved, shows an approachable man seated informally at his desk, a position typical of her male portraits (Plate 4).³³ John Taylor's first initiative in Ireland was to create a Sunday school in Dublin, of which more will be said presently. Taylor, like Thomas Kelly, devoted himself to spreading the gospel. He does not appear to have had an income and Maria, who found his lengthy biblical expositions rather tedious, was the main wage earner.

Maria Taylor's paintings and drawings are often not dated, making it difficult to establish a chronology of her work or her movements. However, she and John Taylor probably spent much of their first three years in Ireland at Rossana, where



4 – Engraving from a painting by Maria Taylor of Revd Benjamin Williams Mathias by Charles Turner (published 20 March 1821 in Dublin and London) (copyright Trustees of the British Museum)

Sarah Tighe was now settled permanently. Their third and fourth children, Sarah Ann (Sally) and Henry Atwood were both born there, in 1815 and 1817 respectively. They also stayed in Dublin at the Tighe townhouse in Upper Dorset Street. Letters written from Dublin (No. 16 Granville Street, Mountjoy Square in 1818 and No. 11 Lower Dorset Street in 1820), and the fact that their youngest child, John William Augustus was born at Upper Dorset Street in 1818, suggest that during the period 1818-20 they may have been based in Dublin. Visits were also paid to friends and Tighe relations in county Wicklow, to the Kellys at Kellyville, the Hamiltons at Hamwood, county Meath (Sarah Tighe's other daughter, Caroline, had married Charles Hamilton (1772-1857)), and to Woodstock, Mrs Tighe's estate in county Kilkenny. They had help with the children: Susan Paradise, from Bristol, was succeeded by Fanny Maher in 1817/18, who was not only a nurse but a friend. Maria Taylor resumed her exhibiting career immediately, showing eight portraits and cottage scenes at the Hibernian Society of Artists in Dublin in 1814 and 1815, and was immediately noticed; in 1814 the *Monthly Museum* recorded: 'Mrs Taylor's pictures exhibit a taste and delicacy of execution rarely to be met with.' In 1815 John Taylor was listed as a member of the Hibernian Society of Artists in the catalogue of the exhibition; perhaps women were not admitted as members.³⁴

Rossana was described by the Reverend G.N. Wright in 1822 as 'Arcadian', and the same author also claimed that county Wicklow, after the rebellion of 1798, 'continued in the most perfect tranquillity'.³⁵ If there is any truth in the latter assertion, such tranquillity must have owed something to the fact that Sarah Tighe's eldest son William, MP for county Wicklow from 1806 to 1816, was known as a staunch Whig who had opposed Union and voted for Catholic relief, and also to the fact that there were many resident landlords in the Ashford area.³⁶ Rossana, built by William Tighe in 1742-43, was a 'noble mansion ... built entirely of Dutch brick', standing in a sheltered position within a few yards of the River Vartry. It stood in a demesne of over 300 acres, 'most of which is laid out in meadow of the richest description, and adorned by the finest woods in the county; the lime trees in particular are pointed out as objects of beauty and curiosity'.³⁷ John Wesley in 1789 and William Howitt in 1847 were similarly impressed by the beauty of the estate.³⁸ Of life there Caroline Hamilton wrote:

'The house was never empty; the beauty of the surrounding country affording ample amusement to guests, in the daytime, while easy, pleasant, cheerful intellectual conversation made the long evenings seem too short – the neighbours there were of a peculiar description, and their society seldom dull.'³⁹

Maria Taylor's sketchbooks contain many drawings of Rossana and the countryside around it, much of which (about 4,000 acres according to Wright) was owned by the Tighes.⁴⁰ She drew the house itself (Plate 5), the lodge, mill, avenue, dark walk and



5 – *Maria Taylor, JUNE 6 O'CLOCK EVE... ROSSANA FROM MOUNT USHER*
pencil, 23 x 37.5 cm (detail) (courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)

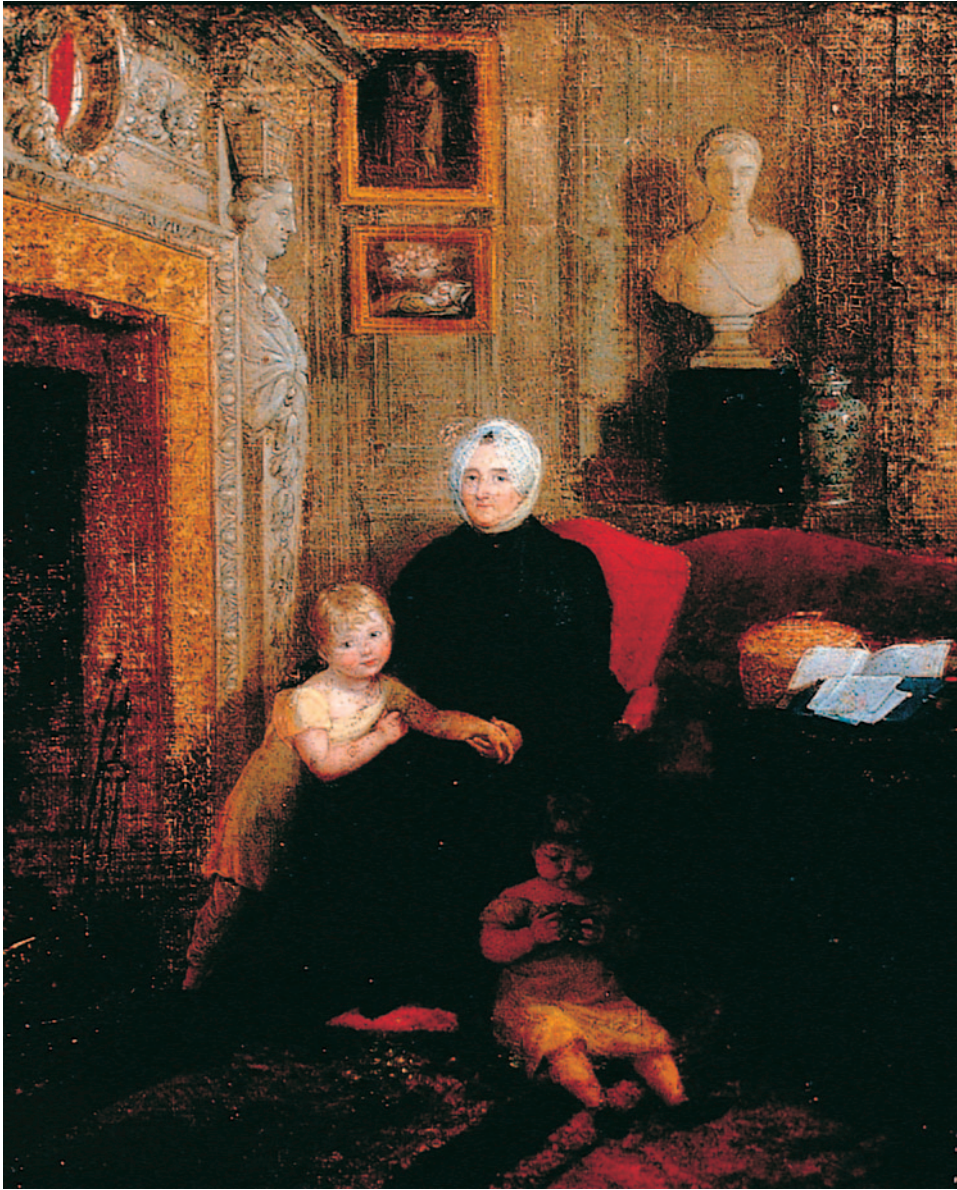
fishpond, and Mrs Tighe's rustic cottage in Glenaley woods which was used for picnics. Estate cottages also feature, such as that at Willybank (or Willowbank), where there was a huge Spanish chestnut tree.⁴¹

This tree, with stones around its base, features in Maria Taylor's first large multi-figure composition in Ireland. *John Wesley preaching in the open air at Willybank, on the estate of William Tighe*, illustrates well her predilection for crowd scenes on holy days, and was probably undertaken at the request of Sarah Tighe (Plate 6). It was completed by July 1815 and is described in detail in a letter of that date by John Taylor. He wrote that Willowbank was named after an earlier William Tighe, who planted trees in this place as well as 'extensive avenues' nearby, and that John Wesley and, subsequently, his preachers 'held quarterly meetings and regularly preached there for many years'.⁴² John Wesley had, of course, died in 1791, and the painting was a reconstruction using the Romney portrait of Wesley referred to earlier, which was at Rossana, and a typical meeting which the Taylors would have witnessed. Maria Taylor also copied the Romney in an individual portrait.⁴³ The audience includes Mrs Tighe's brewer, Molly Handcock (one of her servants), the Rossana postboy, a Mrs Bryant who was 100 years old, an old man who had been converted by John Taylor, Mr Taylor's old friend Mr Norton, a woodranger called Murphy, and there were also portraits of Maria Taylor's children (including her youngest, Sarah Ann Rosanna, who was six months old at the time) and John Taylor himself. The building in the background is said to be the school house in which preachings were usually held.

The most magnificent room at Rossana was the long room or hall, measuring approximately 68 x 35 feet, with a fine ceiling decorated by Italian craftsmen.⁴⁴ At



one end of this room was an organ which had been installed especially for John Wesley, and on which Maria Taylor had performed as a child.⁴⁵ She does not appear to have sketched or painted in this room. However, paintings as well as drawings exist of the Rossana drawing room, which had a carved mantelpiece (the overmantel inset with a large oil painting said to be by Giovanni Paolo Panini) and panelled walls, reputedly by Grinling Gibbons.⁴⁶ Sarah Tighe herself, in her widow's black, which she wore until her death, appears with two of her grandchildren by the mantelpiece in an oil painting and in several drawings (Plate 7). A painting known as *The Tighe Family in the Drawing Room at Rossana* shows five children, almost certainly the children of Charles and Caroline Hamilton, in a typically informal snapshot group with a black cat in the foreground and the mantelpiece in the background, a view of the room which is reproduced in drawings (Plate 8).⁴⁷ *The Kelly children playing in the dining room at Rossanagh* appears to show not the dining room, but the other end of the drawing room, with a large window opening onto the park, and six children, again informally grouped, with a dog in the foreground (Plate 9).⁴⁸ Windows – often affording a view of parkland beyond, often open and sometimes with vases of flowers in front of them – are characteristic of Maria Taylor's interior portraits and serve to place her sitters in a natural context in accordance with post-Rousseau, Romantic thought. A similar window at Rossana, seen



7 – Maria Taylor, *Portrait of Sarah Tighe*
oil on canvas, 42 x 35 cm (courtesy James Adam Auctioneers)

opposite 6 – Maria Taylor, *John Wesley Preaching in the Open Air at Wilbybank,
on the Estate of William Tighe*
c.1815, oil on canvas, 74.5 x 103 cm (courtesy Trustees of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London)



Maria Taylor

8 – *THE TIGHE FAMILY IN THE DRAWING-ROOM AT ROSSANA*, oil on canvas (photo courtesy TCD)

opposite 9 – *THE KELLY CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE DINING ROOM AT ROSSANAGH*, oil on canvas, 67 x 61 cm

10 – *THE HARVEST DANCE AT ROSSANA, CO WICKLOW*, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 76.5 cm

from outside, features in a genre painting, *The Harvest Dance at Rossana, Co Wicklow* (preparatory sketch in sketchbook 8), in which it sheds light on a festival of reapers (Plate 10). Corn-clad figures, illuminated from the window, dance to music from a fiddle, pipe and bagpipes. They are watched by a group of country people, including several children, and by Tighes, compositionally very much part of the scene, in the window of the house.

Many other Wicklow houses appear in the sketchbooks, including the neighbouring Mount Usher, Cronroe Lodge (William Eccles), Dunrane (Lord Rossmore) and Ballycurry, a classical house designed by Francis Johnston in 1805 (Tottenhams). She also drew Glanmore Castle – which had been rebuilt in the gothic style by Francis Johnston for Francis Synge – and painted Francis Synge himself in his library with a picture of Glanmore Castle on the wall behind (Plate 11).⁴⁹ The picturesque Devil's Glen, one side of which was owned by Mr Tottenham and the other by Francis Synge, was a favourite subject, as were Wicklow Head and





11 – Maria Taylor,
FRANCIS SYNGE OF GLANMORE
CASTLE oil on canvas (detail)

Glendalough to which I will return later.

Long periods appear to have been spent with the Kellys at Kellyville, near Athy, Queen's County.⁵⁰ Maria Taylor taught the young Kelly sisters to draw and paint.⁵¹ There are portraits in oil of the Revd Thomas Kelly (painted around 1815), William F.F. Kelly, aged three (also 1815), and Carolina Kelly (around 1819) (all private collection, Australia).⁵² Drawings exist of Elizabeth Kelly, her five children, and Kellyville itself, and there is a watercolour (dated 1816) of a young man thought to be the young Mr Kelly (private collection, Australia). In another watercolour she depicted *Old Silvester, gardener to the Reverend Thomas Kelly* (Plate 12). She also painted Thomas Cosby and his wife, Charlotte Cosby (sister of Thomas Kelly), of nearby Stradbally Hall, in a pair of individual portraits (private collection, Ireland), and Frances Pigott (Charlotte Cosby's niece) in a charming outdoor portrait, with Stradbally Hall, which had been rebuilt in 1772, in the background (Plate 13). A pair of unsigned portraits of members of another prominent local family may be attributed with some confidence to Maria Taylor. As is the case in her portraits of Benjamin Williams Mathias, Thomas Cosby and Francis Synge, that of Thomas de Burgh of Birt (near Athy) shows the subject seated at a desk (private collection, England). *Lord and Lady Downes with their daughter, the Honourable Annette de Burgh*, probably executed around 1816, is a more formal and less

12 – Maria Taylor,
*OLD SILVESTER. GARDENER TO
 THE REVEREND THOMAS KELLY*
 pencil and wash, 23 x 33 cm
 (courtesy National Gallery of
 Ireland)



usual composition (Plate 15). The nearby Rock of Dunamase appears in a drawing.

Maria Taylor's portraits of the Grattans may have been executed while she was at Kellyville, as the Right Honourable Henry Grattan owned a house, Dunrally Fort, on his estate at Moyanna near Stradbally, county Offaly. This estate (formerly owned by the Cosby family) had been granted to Grattan by the Irish Parliament in 1782. They may, however, have been painted at his other house, Tinnehinch, in county Wicklow. In Maria Taylor's portrait of Mrs Henry Grattan, of which several versions exist, her husband is represented with his Declaration of Rights (carried in April 1782) in a picture on the wall behind her (Plate 14). She herself is seated in front of a desk by a window; a book lies open and petals lie scattered around a vase of flowers. Significant detail and the inclusion of a desk and window make this a typical Taylor portrait composition. An oil painting of Henry Grattan, attributed to Maria Taylor, has the same characteristics, and, in addition, illustrates the artist's tendency to elongate the human form (Plate 16). *A History of Ireland*, on which his hand rests, serves to indicate his own historical significance, and an open window through which he is looking suggests a metaphor for his ideals of Irish freedom.⁵³ There is also a drawing (in sketchbook 2) of Henry Grattan's daughter Mary Anne – who had married John Blachford, of Altadore, county Wicklow, nephew of Sarah Tighe and brother of Mary, the author of *Psyche* – executed at Rossana in May 1814.



*13 – Maria Taylor, FRANCES PIGOTT WITH STRADBALLY HALL IN THE BACKGROUND
1817, oil on canvas, 43 x 33 cm*

14 – Maria Taylor, *Portrait of Mrs Henry Grattan*
oil on canvas, 43 x 34 cm
(courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)



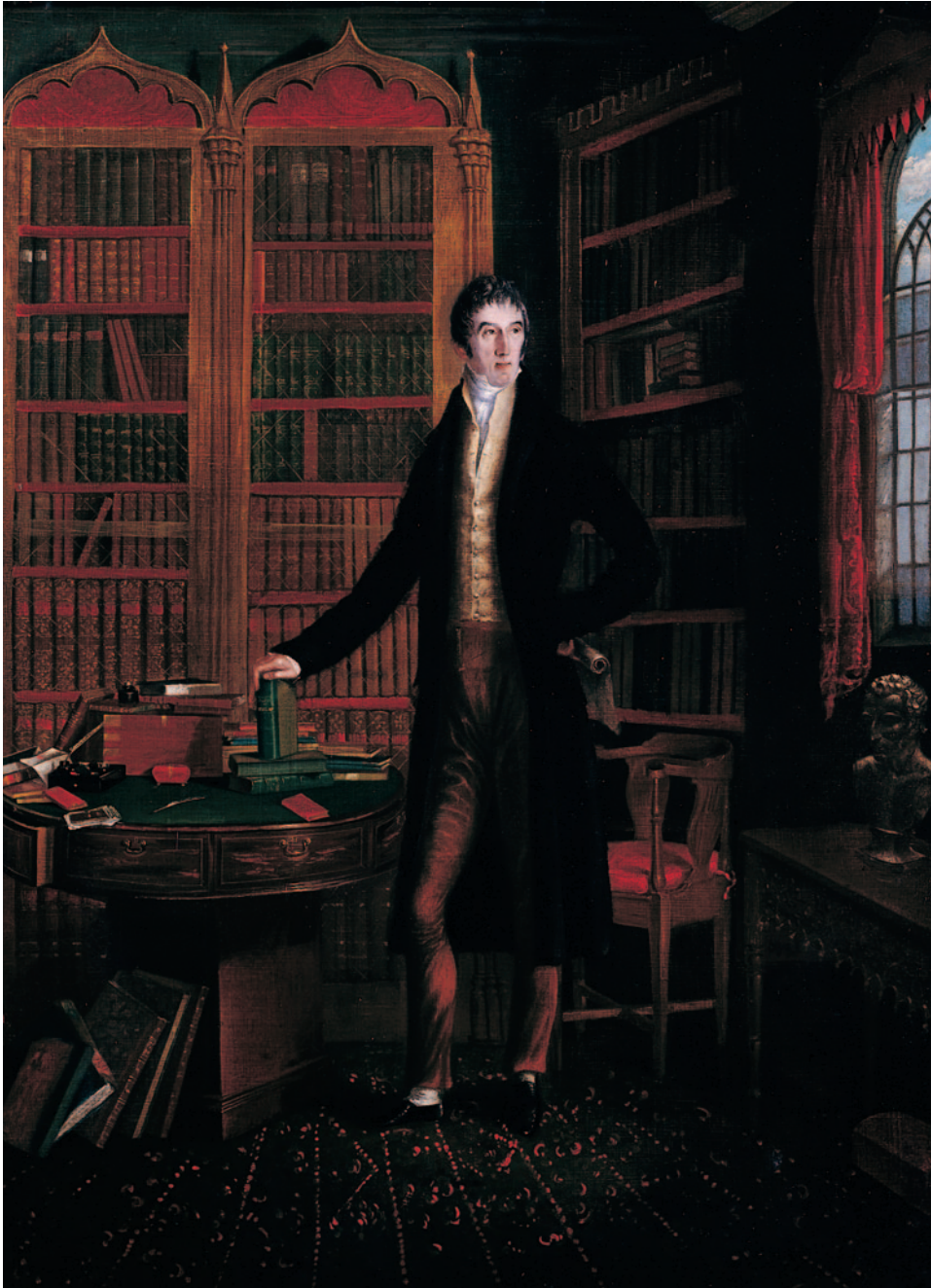
The Taylors also visited the Hamiltons at Hamwood, although Caroline Hamilton was not as close to Maria Taylor as her sister, Elizabeth Kelly. Three Hamilton portraits listed by Walter Strickland in his *Dictionary of Irish Artists* (1913) remain unlocated.⁵⁴ A group portrait, *Alexander Hamilton with his wife and daughters* (private collection, Ireland), is a beautiful illustration of her compositional skills and of what a reviewer referred to as her ‘sprightly intelligence, variety of natural expression and lightness of pencil’.⁵⁵ Alexander Hamilton (1774-1852) QC, of Newtown Hamilton, county Armagh and Oak Lawn, county Dublin, was a first cousin of Charles Hamilton of Hamwood, and active in the Hibernian Church Missionary Society founded in 1814.⁵⁶ He and his wife Juliana had at least four daughters, the eldest of whom, Isabella, married John Synge of Glanmore Castle, Woodstock in county Kilkenny – which Sarah Tighe had inherited from her parents (Rt Hon Sir William Fownes and Lady Elizabeth Ponsonby), and where her eldest son William lived (until his death in 1816) with his family – features in many drawings. Maria drew the Tighes, the Red House and the cottage ornée on the estate, as well as nearby Tidington House, Cluan Castle and Inistioge Abbey, where the poet Mary Tighe was buried. The Tighes, Kellys and Hamiltons and their numerous chil-



15 – *Attributed to Maria Taylor, LORD AND LADY DOWNES WITH THEIR DAUGHTER, THE HONOURABLE ANNETTE DE BURGH* oil on canvas, 36 x 48 cm

dren spent much time together. In one double-page drawing of the Woodstock drawing room, twelve family members are represented and named (Plate 18). Maria Taylor did not only portray the gentry, however. The sketchbooks also contain sympathetic portraits of her hosts' servants, local characters, cottagers and beggars: *Old Silvester* has already been mentioned; others include *David Ramel the Swiss servant of Mrs Tighe*, *Silvester Mackdoniel an Irish Beggarman*, and *An Irish Rebel who Threatened to Murder Mrs Tighe* (Plate 17).⁵⁷

It is recorded by descendants that before Maria Taylor left London, the Prince Regent – whose interest in art inclined increasingly towards genre – requested her to send him her first Irish picture.⁵⁸ This was an oval painting of children at the Dispensary Lane Sunday School in Dublin, which was established by John Taylor and Miss Isabella Hamilton (probably an unmarried cousin of Charles Hamilton of Hamwood) soon after the Taylors' arrival in Ireland. The painting has not been



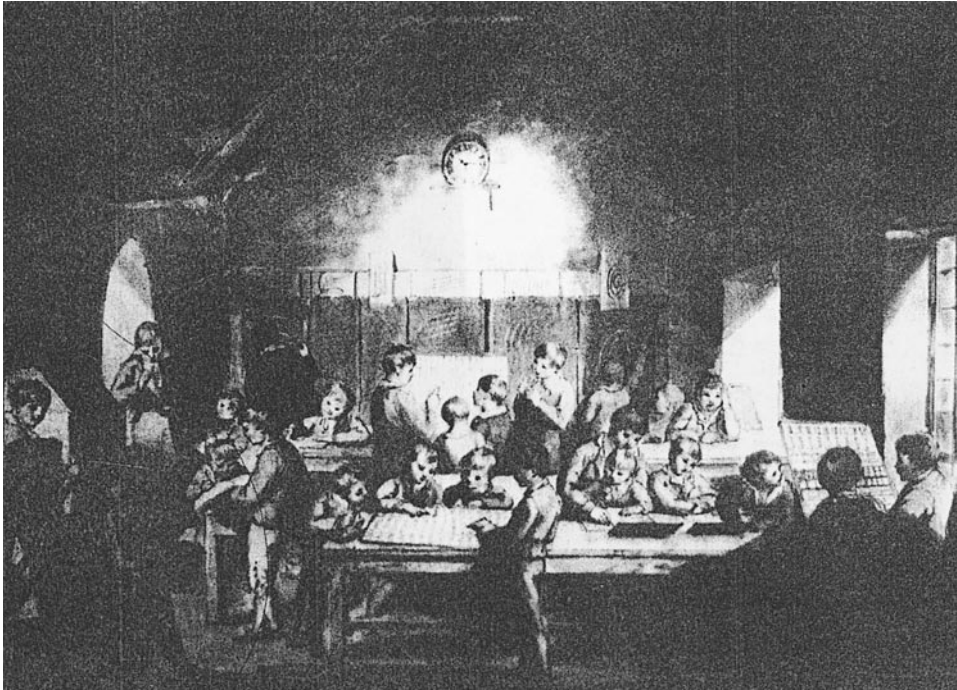
16 – *Attributed to Maria Taylor, HENRY GRATTAN MP IN A LIBRARY*
oil on canvas, 94 x 77 cm (detail) (courtesy Brian P. Burns)



17 – Maria Taylor, *AN IRISH REBEL WHO THREATENED TO MURDER MRS TIGHE*, pencil, 23 x 29 cm

18 – Maria Taylor, *THE DRAWING ROOM, WOODSTOCK, WITH THE FAMILY AMUSING THEMSELVES*
pencil, 23.5 x 33 cm (x 2) (detail) (both courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)





19 – Maria Taylor, JOHN SYNGE'S PESTALOZZI SCHOOL AT ROUNDWOOD
 tinted ink drawing (photo courtesy Trinity College Dublin)

located, although there is a pen and ink sketch of the Dispensary Lane School in sketchbook 2. Maria Taylor also drew John Hatch Synge's Pestalozzi school at Nun's Cross, Roundwood (Plate 19). John Synge had stayed at Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's school at Yverdon in Switzerland in the autumn of 1814, and returned to Dublin full of enthusiasm for his system of education. In common with Rousseau's theory in *Emile*, and in accordance with prescriptions in the anonymous *Lodoik ou, leçons de morale pour l'instruction et l'amusement de la jeunesse* (London 1795), this discouraged coercive methods and mechanical learning, and, outside the schoolroom, emphasised the educative role of the mother. Madame de Stael and Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton had already drawn attention to the use of Pestalozzi's system in the education of poor children. In 1815, as an 'Irish Traveller', Synge published *A Biographical Sketch of the Struggles of Pestalozzi to establish his system*, and, over the next three years he published five further works on Pestalozzi's use of forms, numbers and fractions. Maria Taylor's tinted ink drawing, for which there is a preparatory sketch in sketchbook 3, is a closely observed representation of the schoolroom at Roundwood, showing charts and tables. Her interest in children's education and Sunday schools is reflected in several other



Maria Taylor

20 – *PATTERN AT GLENDALOUGH*

oil on canvas, 102 x 124 cm (courtesy Dept of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin)

opposite 21 – *PATRON'S DAY AT THE SEVEN CHURCHES, GLENDALOUGH*

oil on canvas, 104 x 132 cm (Patrick F. Brown collection)

22 – *PATRON'S DAY AT THE SEVEN CHURCHES, GLENDALOUGH*

oil on canvas, 106.5 x 128.5 cm (courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)

sketchbook drawings of schoolroom scenes in Ireland, and the importance of the parental role in new educational initiatives adds another dimension to her numerous, and often lightly dismissed representations of mothers and children.

According to John William Augustus Taylor, the Prince Regent expressed approval of the Sunday School painting but 'demanded a larger canvas, depicting Irish manners'.⁵⁹ The subject chosen by Maria Taylor was *Patron's Day at the Seven Churches, Glendalough*. There are several sketches in sketchbook 3 on this theme, and three different paintings, two of which are in public collections in Dublin.⁶⁰ Glendalough in county Wicklow, with its seven churches and religious sites connected with the life of St Kevin, had been one of the largest monastic settlements in Ireland. By the eighteenth century it attracted tourists as well as pilgrims, and on 3



June an annual patron or pattern was held. There were two aspects of this event – the secular and the devotional. Joseph Peacock had already depicted the secular occasion in an elaborate and realistic painting of 1813 (Ulster Museum), which showed people drinking, dancing, buying and selling a variety of goods at improvised stalls, and even faction fighting. Like Peacock, Maria Taylor exaggerated the height of the Round Tower and of the hills on either side of the valley in all three paintings, and in one, *Pattern at Glendalough*, she also represented the entertainments which occurred mainly to the north and north-east of the ruined cathedral (Plate 20). In this latter painting there are refreshment tents, games (horseshoe throwing, skittles and wrestling), vendors and rows of tethered horses. However, the atmosphere is more civilised than in Peacock's version. Groups of country people and fashionably dressed visitors, many carrying or accompanying children, are linked in an elegant frieze across the foreground.

Maria Taylor's other two Glendalough paintings, both known as *Patron's Day at the Seven Churches, Glendalough*, are variants of a different scene and contrast markedly with Peacock (Plates 21, 22). These focused on the devotional occasion in the old graveyard around the cathedral. One was executed for the Prince Regent, and presumably sent to him in London. According to Ruth Young, it was declared to be 'the best picture ever painted of Irish manners'.⁶¹ The other is said to have been painted at the request of Irish friends who thought that such a record of Irish customs should not leave Ireland.⁶² While there are considerable differences in detail, the general composition and several characters and groups are the same in both. In both paintings the scenery has been heavily romanticised. The hills and tower are exaggerated. The lower lake is shown much closer than in reality. Most striking of all, the east end of the cathedral is magnified, and, unlike in other representations and descriptions of the period, divided into two ivy-clad ruins on a steep eminence – a dramatic division which suggests deliberate religious symbolism.⁶³ Activities emphasise the religious focus. People are grouped around tombstones, praying, mourning or decorating them with flowers; a child gives money to a beggar; a figure is shown embracing St Kevin's Cross (a granite cross with an unpierced ring) in accordance with a custom described by Wright in 1822. In the National Gallery of Ireland version, a mother in a dark cloak with a child on her knee suggests Mariology. Finally, a long procession of pilgrims descends from the cathedral to St Kevin's Church (where Roman Catholic services were held from 1810), presumably on their way to other religious sites in the valley. As in *John Wesley preaching in the open air at Willybank, on the estate of William Tighe*, and, indeed, as in all Maria Taylor's multi-figure compositions, the crowd is extremely various, bringing to mind the importance attached to all-inclusive communal celebrations in the Moravian and Methodist Churches.⁶⁴ There are beggars, country people, fashionable men and women, men in clerical dress and soldiers and, as usual,

the scene is enlivened by children. Significantly, on the far left, a woman artist is shown sketching the scene. Doubtless a self-portrait, the inclusion of this figure serves on the one hand to emphasise the artist's detachment as an Englishwoman and non-Catholic, and on the other to show how easily she was able to integrate. In both versions, a man (in different positions), near to the artist and also observing rather than participating, bears a resemblance to John Taylor. One of her three Glendalough compositions was exhibited with the Artists of Ireland group at the Dublin Society Rooms in Hawkins Street in 1816 as *Patron's Day at the Seven Churches, Glendalough*.

At the same exhibition, Maria Taylor exhibited *Gypsies at a cottage door*. Only two other paintings, also genre scenes, were exhibited during her lifetime – *All Hallows Eve* (1817) and *The Cottage Door* (1819), both at the Dublin Society Rooms. It has not been possible to identify *Gypsies at a Cottage Door* or *The Cottage Door*, although several paintings and drawings fit these titles. *All Hallows Eve*, however, may be a painting for which preparatory drawings exist in sketchbooks 6 and 11, depicting an old Halloween custom. A young woman, blindfolded, and watched by groups of adults and children, is shown kneeling with her hand raised over three large plates, one of which appears to contain pebbles. Her future in love would be revealed by the dish – either empty, or with clean or dirty water – into which she puts her hand (Plate 23).

The whereabouts of several of the thirteen portraits located by Walter Strickland in his *Dictionary of Irish Artists* is now unknown.⁶⁵ However, many portraits not on Strickland's list have been located, suggesting that Maria Taylor's career in Ireland as a portraitist was far more prolific than has been supposed. Those not already mentioned include *Jane Bryan of Cong, county Galway in a landscape* (Sotheby's, 21 May 1998), a group portrait of the Trench children with their grandmother (private collection, Ireland), a formal outdoor portrait of *Miss Jackson of Enniscoie, county Mayo* (Plate 25), and *Robert William Law and Elizabeth Johnstone (his wife), of Killbarrick House, Raheny, County Dublin* (Plate 24).⁶⁶ *Miss Jackson* illustrates her rarer, more static and formal style in portraiture, and inevitably evokes the contemporary nature/nurture debate.⁶⁷ Wild flowers loom thickly from the shadows on the left, while on the right there are well-lit flowers in pots. In the foreground is a watering can, an emblem of nurture. Miss Jackson sits rather stiffly on a bank; the lines of her body lead upwards and merge with the tree trunk behind, suggesting developing maturity. The same floral dichotomy occurs in her portrait *Robert William Law and Elizabeth Johnstone*, who are shown in their cottage ornée. However, in this the poses are relaxed. Mr Law appears to be reading to his wife while she looks up from her sewing, an intimate moment which the artist captured in other portraits.⁶⁸ Among numerous portraits of her own family is a group in a landscape showing the artist herself, her husband and their four children; Henry



Maria Taylor

23 – *ALL HALLOWS EVE*
oil on canvas, 61 x 76 cm (detail)

24 – *MISS JACKSON OF
ENNISCOE, COUNTY MAYO*
oil on canvas, 39.5 x 29.5 cm
(detail) (courtesy N. Nicholson)

opposite

25 – *ROBERT WILLIAM LAW
AND ELIZABETH JOHNSTONE
(HIS WIFE), OF KILLBARRICK
HOUSE, RAHENY, CO DUBLIN*
oil on canvas

26 – *GROUP PORTRAIT OF THE
ARTIST, HER HUSBAND AND
CHILDREN IN A WOODED
LANDSCAPE*
oil on canvas, 45 x 59 cm
(Phillips, London, 24 Nov 1998,
22 June 1999)



Atwood, who had died in 1818, is represented as a spirit (Plate 26). Executed in 1818 or 1819, this is a beautiful illustration of her outdoor portraiture and of her skill in grouping figures. The heads and children's arms link into an arabesque. The dead child, however, is separate; he is playing by himself, facing out of the picture, and his ghostly form merges significantly with that of his mother whose dress is similarly translucent. Another painting shows the artist's three eldest children, Jonathan, Susan and Sarah with three dogs; the riverside setting suggests Rossana (private collection, USA). There is a watercolour and pencil drawing of Susanna Maria Taylor at the age of three in the National Library of Ireland.⁶⁹

The Regency came to an end with the death of George III on 29 January 1820. On 17 April 1820 Maria Taylor wrote a letter from No. 11 Lower Dorset Street, Dublin, to her friend Mrs Edmonds in Conduit Street, London.⁷⁰ The Edmonds had been family friends through the Moravian Church at Fetter Lane in London. In this she expressed her longing to be home again in England, and mentioned that they were to have returned the previous autumn. As she lay dying about six weeks later she asked for hymns to be sung in accordance with Moravian custom.⁷¹ It is probable that her funeral was held at St George's Church, Dublin (where her youngest son John William Augustus Taylor had been baptised in 1818) before her burial in Drumcondra.⁷² Sarah Tighe immediately invited John Taylor and the children to Rossana 'as soon as possible'. She wrote: 'A gloom is cast over the whole family and all who know it lament with us.'⁷³ Soon afterwards John Taylor returned with the children to London, where he fell ill and died, just over a year after his wife, at the age of 37. He was buried on 5 September 1821 at Bunhill Fields. Sarah Tighe, heavily in debt, died in 1822. Her grandson Daniel Tighe bought Rossana in 1825 and it remained in the Tighe family until 1936.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to James Adam Auctioneers; Art History Department, Trinity College, Dublin; Edna Cooper; Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin; Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin; Christopher Gibbs; Gregory W. Gromadzki; National Gallery of Ireland; Lorraine Parsons, Jacqueline Thalmann, Ian Thomson, Anthony Tighe and John Lewis Wilding. I am also indebted to numerous private collectors.

ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

NGI National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin

NLI National Library of Ireland, Dublin

- ¹ The earliest mention of her in a dictionary of artists appears to be in G.K. Nagler, *Neues allgemeines Künstler-Lexicon*, 22 vols (Munich 1835-52) XVII (1847) in which no biographical information is given except that she was born around 1778.
- ² London Metropolitan Archives, MS X069/008, St George the Martyr, Bloomsbury, Baptisms, 1777, 154. There has been considerable confusion about her date of birth. Ruth Young (also apparently known as Alice Ruth Young) gave 1777, a date usually repeated, in all her publications; A.R. Young, *A Spilsbury Potpourri in Four Parts* (typescript dated 1903 on microfilm, Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints, Exhibition Road, London); R. Young, *Mrs Chapman's Portrait, A Beauty of Bath of the 18th Century* (Bath 1926); R. Young, *Father and Daughter* (London 1952). A website devoted to the Taylor family gives 1779, the birth date of a younger brother, Jonathan Robert Henry Spilsbury, who died young.
- ³ 1823 has appeared as her date of death, for example in W.G. Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists*, 2 vols (London and Dublin 1913), and U. Thieme and F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 36 vols (Leipzig 1907-50).
- ⁴ Her father is often confused with his brother John (1739-1769), who was also a printmaker; see *The New Dictionary of National Biography* under Jonathan Spilsbury for an explanation.
- ⁵ For an account of the Moravian Church see D. Bogue and J. Bennett, *The history of dissenters, from the revolution to the year 1808*, 2 vols (London 1808; 2nd ed. 1833) II, section 4.
- ⁶ Details of the family's connection with the Moravian Church are in the Moravian Church Archive in Muswell Hill, London. Maria Spilsbury Taylor's biographer, Ruth Young, did not allude to Rebecca Spilsbury's failed application for membership of the Moravian Church, nor to Maria's upbringing within the Church.
- ⁷ Moravian Church Archive, Muswell Hill, London, Minutes of the Elders' Conferences Held in the Congregation at London, XII, 7 February 1789, 4. The spelling in these quotations is accurate.
- ⁸ *ibid.*, 9 May 1789, I.
- ⁹ The spelling of 'Rossana' varies considerably (Rossanagh, Rosana, Rosanna, for example). 'Rossana' has been adopted as it corresponds with practice current during the period under discussion. The meaning of the name is either 'wood of the marsh' or 'place of brushwood', coming from the Gaelic *roseanaigh* or *rosanach* respectively. I am grateful to the current owner (who uses 'Rossana') for this information. For William Tighe, see E.M. Johnston-Liik, *The History of the Irish Parliament 1692-1800*, 6 vols (Belfast 2002) II, vi.
- ¹⁰ NLI, MS 4811, Reminiscences of Caroline Hamilton (née Tighe) on her family history; N. Curnock (ed.), *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, AM*, 8 vols (London 1909-16) VI, 472d; VII, 133d.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*, VII, 461, 468, n.2; also *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, VII, 1910, 122-23. Romney also executed portraits of Sarah Tighe's sons William and Henry in the 1780s (see H. Ward and W. Roberts, *Romney, A Biographical and Critical Essay with a Catalogue Raisonné of his Works*, 2 vols (London 1904) 158-59.

- ¹² Ballymena, county Antrim, Gracehill Moravian Archives, MS 4/36/15, Revd John Worthington to Revd W. Horne, 13 December 1788, and 'Diary of the Brethren's Congregation in Dublin', 16 February, 6 March and 12 July 1789.
- ¹³ The date 1795 which is given for their arrival in G.H. Bell (ed.), *The Hamwood Papers of the Ladies of Llangollen and Caroline Hamilton* (London 1930) 331, and repeated (for example, in A. Crookshank and D. Fitzgerald, Knight of Glin, *Ireland's Painters 1600-1940* (New Haven and London 2002) 191) is an error.
- ¹⁴ C. Maxwell, *Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges* (Dundalk 1949) 198.
- ¹⁵ NLI, MS 4811, Reminiscences of Caroline Hamilton (née Tighe) on her family history. For other evidence of Sarah Tighe's charity, see G.N. Wright, *A Guide to the County of Wicklow* (London 1822) 57; R.H. Ludlow, 'Wesley's Friends at Rosanna', *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 133, 1910, 528; E. Tighe, *The Orphan-House: being a brief history of that institution, and of the proceedings of the founders and directors of that asylum or place of refuge for destitute female children situate at no. 42 Prussia Street* (Dublin 1792).
- ¹⁶ John Rylands University Library, Manchester, MS DDWF 26/69, Rebecca Spilsbury to Mrs Sarah Wesley, 3 June 1789. There are conflicting dates here as John Wesley records going to Rossana on 25 June; see Curnock (ed.), *The Journal of the Revd John Wesley*, VII, 513.
- ¹⁷ John Rylands University Library, Manchester, MS DDWF 26/69, Rebecca Spilsbury to Mrs Sarah Wesley, 3 June 1789 and Rebecca Spilsbury to Miss Sarah Wesley, 3 June 1789; MS DDWF 25/6, Rebecca Spilsbury to Mr Charles Wesley 31 August 1789; MS DDWF 26/70, Rebecca Spilsbury to Miss Sarah Wesley 11 January 1790. There is a full transcript of this last letter (some of which appears to be missing at John Rylands) in Young, *A Spilsbury Potpourri*, part 4, 11-14.
- ¹⁸ NLI, Tighe Papers, MS 4810, Extracts from a Journal of Mary Blachford born 1772.
- ¹⁹ NLI, MS 4811, Reminiscences of Caroline Hamilton (née Tighe) on her family history; John Rylands University Library, Manchester, MS DDWF 26/69, Rebecca Spilsbury to Miss Sarah Wesley, 3 June 1789.
- ²⁰ NGI, Department of Prints and Drawings, Maria Spilsbury sketchbook 9 (19434). Unless otherwise stated, all references to drawings and sketches by Maria Spilsbury Taylor are to those in the 11 sketchbooks in the NGI.
- ²¹ Moravian Church Archive, Muswell Hill, London, Minutes of the Elders' Conferences held in the Congregation at London, XIII, 5 June 1790, item 3.
- ²² *ibid.*, XIII, 23 October 1790, 5 and 24 December 1791, item 7.
- ²³ She was confirmed on 30 April 1795 at St. George's Hanover Square, London. See Young, *Father and Daughter*, 12. Details of her connections in England lie outside the scope of this article.
- ²⁴ Ward and Roberts, *Romney*, II, 158-9. It is possible, also, that the Spilsburys made short visits to Ireland, of which there is no record.
- ²⁵ An account of her popularity is given in Young, *Father and Daughter*, 31.
- ²⁶ London Metropolitan Archives, MS X100/452, St George's Hanover Square, Marriages, 1808, 76.
- ²⁷ Her earliest known Irish sketchbook (sketchbook 2 in the NGI) is dated 7 February 1814 and contains at least ten sketches of the Kellyville area; Ruth Young mentions a letter written by Maria Taylor at Kellyville to Ann Chapman (Young, *Mrs. Chapman's Portrait*, 128.) There is no evidence to suggest that the Taylors arrived in Ireland in 1813, which is the date given by,

- for example, Strickland, and in B. Stewart and M. Cutten, *A Dictionary of Portrait Painters in Britain up to 1920* (London 1997). There are several variants of 'Kellyville' (Kellaville and Kellavil, among others).
- ²⁸ *The Evangelical Magazine* (London) is the main source of this information.
- ²⁹ *Four sermons preached in London at the eighth general meeting of the Missionary Society, May 1802* (London 1802); Moravian Church Archive, Muswell Hill, London, Minutes of the Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen, 16 August 1802. For his continuing involvement with the London Missionary Society, see *The Evangelical Magazine*, April 1810, 171.
- ³⁰ *Report of a Deputation from the Hibernian Society respecting the religious state of Ireland* (London 1807) 36-37.
- ³¹ Revd John William Augustus Taylor (son of Maria Taylor), 'Notes on Mrs John Taylor', transcribed by Ada Taylor, his daughter-in-law (private collection, New Zealand).
- ³² *The Evangelical Magazine* contains many references to Mathias during this period.
- ³³ Other examples are Francis Syngé (private collection, England), Thomas Cosby (private collection, Ireland), Revd Thomas Kelly (private collection, Australia) and Thomas de Burgh (private collection, England).
- ³⁴ A.M Stewart, *Irish Art Loan Exhibitions 1765-1927* (Dublin 1995); *An Address from the Hibernian Society of Artists, to the Right Honourable and Honourable the Dublin Society occasioned by the Report of the Committee of Fine Arts, of the 9 March 1815* (Dublin 1815).
- ³⁵ G.N. Wright, *A Guide to the County of Wicklow* (London 1822) 24, 58. For an account of Wicklow around the time of the rebellion of 1798, see Mrs G.H. Bell (ed.), *The Hamwood Papers of the Ladies of Llangollen and Caroline Hamilton* (London 1930).
- ³⁶ R.G. Thorne, *The House of Commons, History of Parliament Trust* (London 1988), II (Constituencies) 702, and V (Members) 399-401. See also Johnston-Liik, *The History of the Irish Parliament*, II and VI.
- ³⁷ Wright, *A Guide to the County of Wicklow*, 57-58; W. Tighe, 'A History of the Tighe family', *Ashford and District Historical Journal*, 5, July 1998, 49. This demesne comprised three geographical areas or townlands – Rossana Upper, Rossana Lower and Mount Usher.
- ³⁸ Curnock (ed.), *The Journal of the Revd John Wesley*, VII, 513; W. Howitt, *Homes and Haunts of the most eminent British poets* (London 1847) 414.
- ³⁹ NLI, MS 4811, Reminiscences of Caroline Hamilton (née Tighe) on her family history.
- ⁴⁰ Wright, *A Guide to the County of Wicklow*, 59.
- ⁴¹ Tighe, 'A History of the Tighe Family', 52.
- ⁴² Museum of Methodism, London, typescript document entitled 'Extracts from a letter dated July 24, 1815, Rosanna, County Wicklow, Ireland, written by Mr. John Taylor, whose wife, Maria Taylor, née Spilsbury, painted the picture described in it'.
- ⁴³ There are two known copies of Romney's portrait of John Wesley, which is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and which Romney himself is not known to have replicated. Both copies (one in Christ Church College, Oxford, and one in the National Portrait Gallery, London) differ from the original in that they show his gown trimmed with fur. There are historical references to two artists who executed copies: firstly, Maria Spilsbury Taylor, who is said to have executed a copy of the original while it was still in the possession of Sarah Tighe (in other words, before her death in 1822 when it was sold to a follower of Wesley), at the request of the Revd Thomas Roberts of Bristol. In 1825 the latter published an engraving from this

- work by William Ward (*Notes and Queries*, VII, 25 February 1865, 166). A second copy was executed either by Mrs Elizabeth Kelly (Sarah Tighe's daughter) or by Frances Webber (Mrs Kelly's daughter), neither of whom were professional artists. For the former attribution, see Ludlow, 'Wesley's Friends at Rosanna', 530 and Curnock (ed.), *The Journal of John Wesley*, VII, 331, n.3 (where he confuses Mrs Tighe and Mrs Kelly) and 513, n.2; for the latter see Ward and Roberts, *Romney*, II, 169. The provenance of the NPG copy suggests that it is the Kelly/Webber version, and so does its less professional execution; it was probably a copy not of the original, but of the much finer copy in Christ Church. It seems reasonable to suppose, then, that the Christ Church version is the work of Maria Spilsbury Taylor, although there is no currently available documentary evidence to support this attribution.
- ⁴⁴ Tighe, 'A History of the Tighe Family', 50, 52. This room still exists, with the ceiling intact. It occupies the rear of the main house, facing east.
- ⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 52. An organ (possibly the same in which case it may have been moved) also appears in a watercolour of the drawing room at Rossana (private collection, Ireland).
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 54. This interior was sold by previous owners of Rossana before World War II.
- ⁴⁷ Sarah Tighe had three sons. William, the eldest, had three children (born in 1794, 1796 and c.1800), who would have been much older than the children in this picture. Sarah Tighe's other two sons, Henry and John Edward, were childless. Charles and Caroline Hamilton, on the other hand, had five children at the time of this portrait: Charles William (born in 1802), William Tighe (born 1807), and three daughters; a sixth son was born in 1816. Their ages suggest that the painting shows the Hamilton children.
- ⁴⁸ A label on the back of the painting says that it is the dining room, but other drawings, watercolours and paintings of the drawing room suggest that it is the latter. The six Kelly children, in order of age, are Thomas William Brown, Sarah Frances, Fanny, Elizabeth Hannah, Edmund Henry and William Fownes.
- ⁴⁹ There are three known versions of this portrait.
- ⁵⁰ See sketchbooks 2, 3 and 4. In a letter of 3 June 1818 to Susan Paradise, Maria Taylor, at the time in Dublin, wrote of taking the children to Kellyville for 'a little country air' (Young, *Mrs Chapman's Portrait*, 131). Kellyville was about 2.5 miles from Stradbally, behind Ballykilcavan estate and on the outskirts of Ballintubbert, a hamlet around St Bridget's church.
- ⁵¹ C.E. Webber (ed.), *Some Recollections which Caroline Theodosia Kelly ('Aunt Can') considers not worth recording* (privately printed, August 1902) 4 (private collection, Australia).
- ⁵² In the same collection is a portrait of a youth in a black suit with a lace collar which is thought to be of Thomas, son of the Reverend Thomas Kelly and to be by Maria Taylor. Another portrait, of the Revd Thomas Kelly's sister Harriet, who married Sir Richard St George in 1799 and died in 1804, is also thought to be by this artist. It could have been executed in London.
- ⁵³ Another portrait, supposedly of Henry Grattan, has been attributed to Maria Taylor (Mealy's, Castlecomer, county Kilkenny, 23-24 November 2004). The attribution is not convincing.
- ⁵⁴ I have been unable to discover the portraits *G. Hamilton*, *Hugh Hamilton*, and *Mrs Hamilton and Daughter*.
- ⁵⁵ *The Monthly Mirror reflecting men and manners*, 13 (1802) 307.
- ⁵⁶ W.J. McCormack, *The Silence of Barbara Synge* (Manchester 2003) 152.
- ⁵⁷ Sketchbooks 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9.
- ⁵⁸ Young, *Father and Daughter*, 32; Young, *A Spilsbury Potpourri*, part 4, 46; Taylor, 'Notes on Mrs John Taylor'.

- ⁵⁹ Young, *A Spilsbury Potpourri*, part 4, 46
- ⁶⁰ *Patron's Day at the Seven Churches, Glendalough*, in the NGI, is not on display. It is very dark and appears to have been removed from its original frame. *Pattern at Glendalough*, in the Dept of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, is currently on display.
- ⁶¹ Young, *Mrs Chapman's Portrait*, 129. It has not been possible to identify the original version.
- ⁶² Young, *Father and Daughter*, 33; Young, *A Spilsbury Potpourri*, part 4, 46; Young, *Mrs Chapman's Portrait*, 129.
- ⁶³ See, for example, Jonathan Fisher, *Scenery of Ireland illustrated in a series of prints ... drawn and engraved in aquatinta* (Dublin 1795); Wright, *A Guide to the County of Wicklow*, 109-11; also Joseph Peacock's *The Patron, or Festival of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches, Glendalough, County Wicklow 1813* (Ulster Museum, Belfast).
- ⁶⁴ The tradition of 'Love-Feasts', common to both these Churches, exemplifies this, see C.W. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist* (London 1957) 209. Maria Taylor's *The Holiday Feast of 1807* (Tudor House Museum, Southampton) probably represents a Love-Feast.
- ⁶⁵ Mrs Barton (probably the stepsister of Sarah Ponsonby, one of the ladies of Llangollen, see Mrs. G.H. Bell (ed.), *The Hamwood Papers of the Ladies of Llangollen and Caroline Hamilton* (London 1930) 374), Mrs Blachford, three Hamilton portraits, Robert Sandys, and pencil drawings of the Tighes; *The Family Group* may be *The Tighe Family in the Drawing-room at Rossana* (private collection, Ireland).
- ⁶⁶ Other unidentified portraits include a portrait of a lady with her daughter in a landscape, signed and dated 1819 (Sotheby's, 17 July 1985), which may be a self-portrait, and a portrait of a cleric (Sotheby's, 21 May 1998), which shows the sitter by a desk next to an open window through which his church may be seen in the distance. The Crookshank / Glin Archive in Trinity College Dublin has illustrations of several portraits which it has not been possible to identify or locate.
- ⁶⁷ This appears most memorably in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811; 2nd ed. 1813).
- ⁶⁸ See, for example, a painting sold at Sotheby's, 13 December 1982, and Christie's, 3 May 1985.
- ⁶⁹ NLI, Brocas Collection.
- ⁷⁰ Young, *Father and Daughter*, 35. Young, *A Spilsbury Potpourri*, part 4, 50.
- ⁷¹ Young, *Father and Daughter*, 36.
- ⁷² St George's burial registers do not begin until 1824.
- ⁷³ Young, *A Spilsbury Potpourri*, part 4, 52.
-