Mary Riddoch (1901–1966), an extraordinary tale of survival

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Local newspaper reporting of the accident

The Courier and Advertiser Saturday 14 July 1934
Scots woman doctor in amazing crash: Two people were injured in a remarkable accident on the Huntly Rothiemay road yesterday. Mr William Riddoch, timber merchant Rothiemay, was driving his sister Dr Mary Riddoch on a straight decline when something went wrong with the controls of the car. It somersaulted three times. One door was flung 60 feet, the sunshine roof about the same distance and Dr Riddoch was flung into a field. Her brother was thrown into a ditch over a fence. Both passengers were injured and remain in hospital. It was learned last night that Dr Riddoch had not regained consciousness and was very low. Her brother is not so seriously injured.

Aberdeen Journal Saturday 14 July 1934
Serious car spill at Huntly: Injury to woman doctor and brother - Two persons were seriously injured in a motor accident which occurred yesterday afternoon on the Rothiemay Huntly road close to Marquis Road leading to Huntly lodge. The car occupied by Mr Wm Riddoch Tarryblake Rothiemay and his sister Dr Mary Riddoch appears to have mounted the banking on the side of the road and skidding round toppled into a 10ft ditch. Mr Riddoch was pinned beneath the car whilst his sister was thrown a considerable distance into a field. Both motorists were conveyed in an unconscious condition to the Jubilee Cottage Hospital Huntly.

Comment: Graeme who travels this road daily when at Tarryblake describes the bend in the road with a bad camber and the banking mentioned in the second press report. He doesn’t believe that Mary’s brother William was thrown into a ditch over the fence. He remarks that nowhere is there a mention of a dog crossing the road, as his mother told him (but that might have been a fable). He is inclined to believe the second account which is what he was told as a boy (albeit 20 years later).

Local papers issued progress reports about Mary Riddoch’s recovery in the aftermath, but nothing about her long-term rehabilitation.

Aberdeen Journal Monday 16 July 1934
Huntly car accident. Dr Mary Riddoch who was injured in a motor car accident near Huntly on Friday and taken to the Jubilee cottage hospital there, was removed to a nursing home in Aberdeen yesterday. Her condition is still grave. Her brother who was also injured and taken to hospital was reported to be a little better at the week end.

Aberdeen Journal Friday 20 July 1934
Dr Mary Riddoch, Rothiemay, who was badly injured in a Motor accident near Huntly last Friday and was removed from Huntly cottage hospital to the Northern Nursing Home, Aberdeen, was reported to be still in a serious condition last night. There was not much change since her admission to the nursing home.

Aberdeen Journal Monday 23 July 1934
Latest Reports from Infirmaries and Nursing homes. Enquiries were made yesterday at the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Nursing Homes regarding the condition of a number of persons suffering from injuries received in accidents in the past 10 days. The most serious case is that of Dr Mary Riddoch who was severely injured in a motor car accident near Huntly and is in a nursing home. Yesterday her condition showed a very slight change for the better.

Aberdeen Journal Wednesday 25 July 1934
Dr Mary Riddoch who was severely hurt in a motor car accident near Huntly was reported to have shown a slight improvement.

Aberdeen Journal Friday 26 July 1934
There was no change in the condition of Dr Mary Riddoch who was injured in a motor smash near Huntly.