

3rd and last letter written to all Practicing Advocates.

2/10/2002

Dear

I would like to explain why I think that the Speculative Society, or the Spec as it is known, is an elitist, sexist, racist, secret, right wing, and quasi-Masonic organisation, and get some feedback as to whether you think that I am correct, or am I barking up the wrong tree?

My impressions are gleaned from the available Spec documentation.

There are three Centenary histories of the Spec but in fairness any apparent bigotry in the first two could be excused as being typical of periods of history when values were somewhat different than they are today. The most recent History (1968) cannot claim immunity on that score. Many of the members detailed in the 1968 History, and some of the contributors dominate public life today. In the Preface of “The 1968 Bicentenary Edition” the Chairman of the Publishing Committee states that by the series of Essays contained within the History, he sets out to give a state of the health of the Society since the last History was produced in 1905. That said, the reader has no option other than to accept that the Essays, and other articles contained in the 1968 History, are how the Speculative Society sees itself, or wishes itself to be seen, at least by its own members and their families, at whom this book appears to be aimed. The 1968 History in no way sets out to address the uninformed reader and is what I believe is known as a “Vanity” publication to commemorate what is seen as the Spec’s development. Given that the members who contribute are all men who have had the benefit of privileged and University education, one is left to conclude that the contributors are aware of what they are saying, and the implications that can be drawn from their stated views.

ELITIST.

1/ The overwhelming impression I gained on reading the 1968 History is that the Spec is an organisation with a pride, in fact an arrogance, in its unique numerical dominance of the College of Justice, and the upper echelons of the judiciary through its extraordinary members:

E.g: “It was once said by a member of the Speculative Society that you could not throw a stone in Princes Street without hitting an ex-President of the University Law Society. This might equally have been said of the Speculative Society itself, whose Presidents must form almost as large a proportion of the population of Edinburgh, though a more fruitful stone-throwing area for them might be the environs of Parliament House” From 2. The Society This Century-I. By: Gerald H. Elliot. 1968. Spec.No1640. [SS01]

“We had mostly come, as they did, from modestly prosperous middle-class Edinburgh homes, but we numbered a sprig of the Scottish aristocracy among us and so did they. As had always been the case, students of the law provided the majority of our members and continued to do so—young Advocates and Writers to the Signet”....“It is most unlikely that there is any society of this size in the country with such a roll of honour. Certainly the great majority of the members of my day achieved at least a modest degree of success in life: two Lords of Appeal, a Lord President, four

Senators of the College of Justice” From 5 An Evening At The Speculative Society. By Sir Derrick Dunlop. 1968. Spec. No 1420. [SS02a] & [SS02b]

The Scotsman signed photograph showing the 16 Senators of the College of Justice at page 64 has been edited (presumably under the direction of the publishing committee chairman Ian Robertson Grant. Spec. No 1587) with asterisks and with the note “INDICATES MEMBERSHIP OF THE SPECULATIVE SOCIETY” beneath the signatures of the 8 Speculator Senators. [SS03]

The boasting of the contributors is not confined to the number of Speculators and the grand rank they achieve in all walks of life, but infers that average Speculators achieve disproportionately high positions and are immune from the law. When one checks the meteoric rise of some of the Sixties Speculators it is hard to argue with the former of these boasts, which is exemplified in the following tongue-in-cheek excerpt from the History of the Speculative Society 1968:

E.g: “Why should this have always been the case? (The extraordinary success of extraordinary Speculators) Surely at an early stage of their career young men did not have the prescience to put forward for membership of the Society only those who were likely to make a material success of life. The answer is that they probably selected them from their friends who had been similarly nurtured to themselves, and who, in consequence had started well placed in the race of life; they joined the Society too because they had at least some intellectual interests and like William Creech appreciated the advantages of Societies in General and Literary Institutions in particular. One’s knowledge of what happened to one’s fellow Speculators is in marked contrast to one’s ignorance of how the members of similar youthful commonwealths at Oxford have fared in the Book of Fate”.... “It may, therefore, be that a decent Edinburgh professional man of modest if reasonable attainments may find himself, somewhat to his surprise, translated to the very rarefied national or international legal, business or medical atmospheres. It can therefore be argued that it is easier to make the professional material grade from Edinburgh than any other place”... [SS02b] & [SS04]

Not content with having numerical superiority, and disproportionate seniority in the professions, the Spec claims immunity from the rule of law. For sheer breathtaking arrogance the following excerpt from the 1968 History would take some beating:

E.g.: “the Speculative which remains autonomous within the curtilage of the University-in the academic world but not of it. In the past the University has, of course, made several famous but abortive litigious attempts to put right what it considered to be an untidy state of affairs. It is unlikely that these attempts will be renewed in the foreseeable future- not so much because the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor are honorary members of the Society as because their chances of success in the courts would be somewhat slim. There was a time when it was said that if you hadn’t belonged to the Speculative you couldn’t hope to become a Senator of the College of Justice. That is not entirely true today but there are still a considerable number of speculators in the Court of Session. We all know, of course, that the judiacature is icy in its impartiality, which is one of the chief glories of this country, but perhaps this impartiality would be stretched to breaking point where the Speculative is concerned and the University are probably aware of this”. From 5 An Evening At The Speculative Society. By Sir Derrick Dunlop. 1968. Spec. No 1420. [SS05] & [SS02a]

There are many other examples of elitism in the book but perhaps the most telling factor in this area is the statistical evidence that can be gleaned from sources outside the book. By checking the background of the Speculators from web-searches two things become immediately apparent: None have gone to state schools, and all have become successful, famous, and usually much-decorated figures. Any bookmaker would surely give short odds on a boy from The Royal High School/Edinburgh Academy, who graduated the University of Edinburgh before entering the Spec, becoming a Senator in the College of Justice. What odds on a girl from any state school going on to a red brick College entering the College of Justice? The odds for such an event would be incalculable because unlike the former proposition the latter has no basis in fact from which to compile odds. That is a shame and is elitism in action.

How would it be if two out of three Scottish Law Lords were Women? Muslim Women?; Black, Muslim Women?; State School educated, Black, Muslim Women?; Perth based, State School educated, Black, Muslim Women?; Dundee University Alumni, Perth based, State School educated, Black, Muslim Women?; and then imagine if this cabal had all spent three years as ordinary members of a secretive all women sewing club in Perth (with in exceptional cases non-residential privileges being granted) before attaining unspecified extraordinary privileges. Imagine also that this group is the latest generation of a long line of judges from the same families. Is such a hypothetical scenario believable?

An equally bizarre situation actually exists today in our justice system. Spec Judges are only representative of their own privileged clique.

SEXIST.

The fact that a Society is restricted to single gender membership does not necessarily make it sexist. The Co-op Women's Guild or the Women's Institute could hardly be described as sexist. As I see it the attitude of the Speculative Society is what must be examined to establish the reason behind the single gender rule. In the case of the Speculative Society one might expect it to be reticent on its members past macho utterances. On the contrary its macho credentials are proudly trumpeted without a trace of apology from the few publications that are available.

E.g.:

“The enfranchisement of women was rejected in 1907, 8-5; by 1912 it was acceptable, 7-5. But the Society stood out strongly against the admission of women to its proceedings, 1939, 11-1, and in 1964 refused to even discuss the subject.” 4/ Current Politics and Debates. By J. A. David Hope, Spec No 1750. [SS06a] & [SS06b]

& “Is modern woman too emancipated?” Essay by J. F. A. Peck. 1952 Spec No 1626.

& “Has female emancipation gone too far?” Essay by D. M. Simpson 1972 Spec No 1794. [SS07]

& “During its course it is interesting that an attempt to make women eligible for membership was resisted successfully, a surprise in view of the prevailing mood elsewhere” The Society This Century-II. By Kenneth H. Osborne. 1968. Spec No 1721. [SS08]

& “It was at least a relief to find that the Speculative is still a Mount Athos among Societies of this kind. Here is no distaff side, no petticoat government, no curtain lectures. Perhaps it might be unthinkable that it should be considered otherwise, but the price of liberty from feminine infiltration which has eroded so many institutions is eternal vigilance. The introduction of women was seriously proposed, though soundly defeated in my day (it was after the First World War when revolutionary ideas were floating about); at Oxford New College has recently canvassed a similar proposition; and in Edinburgh the walls of Jericho of the Royal Medical Society have recently been breached by the monstrous regiment of women, and this is a Society similar to the Speculative and even more venerable, where feminine intrusion would have seemed unbelievable. From 5 An Evening At The Speculative Society. By Sir Derrick Dunlop. 1968. Spec. No 1420. [SS09]

RACIST.

The 1968 History is frank in admitting that the Society is dominated by Scots lawyers and is a less cosmopolitan place than it once was, and but for the Napoleonic wars the Society might have been 99.9% Scottish and English. The Irish don't fare very well and one has to go back to the years between 1814 and 1864 for the two most recent Irish members. Given the International diversity of The University of Edinburgh, which is the main recruiting ground for the Spec, I find the statistics **(From 6. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SPECULATIVE SOCIETY By Niall G. Campbell Spec No 1756) [SS19a] & [SS19b]** of nationality astonishing.

Furthermore, the flavour that emanates from the 1968 History and the Essays featured in the Roll of Officials & Members demonstrate the insular nature of the membership. The Society's bigoted views are unashamedly explained in the following examples:

E.g.

“Do the Wogs begin at Calais?” Essay by E. O. St John. Spec No 1649. [SS10]

& “Up until 1933, since when the colour problem has strangely not been formally discussed by the Society, a segregationist view was taken. In 1910 the Society thought, by 7-2, it impossible for white and coloured races to live together on terms of social equality. In 1926, by 5-3, it was decided in favour of barring coloured immigration to the Dominions, and in 1933 a large majority, 13-4 decided in favour of the question “Should a colour bar be maintained?”

From 4/ Current Politics and Debates. By J. A. David Hope, Spec No 1750. [SS11]

& “An Irishman once said an extempore speech isn’t worth the paper its written on”

From 5 An Evening At The Speculative Society. By Sir Derrick Dunlop. 1968. Spec. No 1420. [SS12]

& The Essay “M’Bongo M’Bongo v. the King Emperor” at page 69 of the 1968 History presumably gives rise to the proverbial Bongo Bongo land. [SS13]

SECRETIVE.

I can see a certain irony in my position regarding the secretive nature of the Speculative Society. The verifying evidence I have uncovered about the Spec has all come from public libraries, namely the N.L.S. and Edinburgh Central. The 1710 Queen Anne Copyright Act, which ensures that the N.L.S. is entitled to a copy of every book that is printed in Britain, could go some way towards explaining this. That other books belonging to members would come onto the market and into public libraries when a member died may explain the existence of copies of the History further, and no doubt would not concern the powerful Speculators.

In 1968 the chances of anyone stumbling across a copy of the 1968 History among the seven million publications that the N.L.S. has in its archives would seem pretty remote. The ability to complete a “Keyword Anywhere Search” through the N.L.S.’s “Online Catalogue” of three million books in less than one second is still something that amazes me, so how must it have seemed to men in the 1960’s who wrote with quill pens? This anomalous situation is further explained as far as I can see by the arrogance of the Speculative Society and their belief that they were above the law (see above) and immune from publicity due to their domination of the Legal Profession and the Scottish Establishment. Who would dare publish anything about them? How easy would it be to obtain a gagging order on anyone foolish enough to challenge the Spec’s anonymity?

It is my belief that one other factor allowed me to identify so many men who are very successful and that is the fact that when the records were compiled for the 1968 History the men concerned were not successful and need not be concerned about publicity. Who in 1968 was concerned about exposing to the public a young Speculator Advocate called James Peter Hymers MacKay? In 2002 however it may be of interest to many people that Lord Mackay of Clashfern, was granted extraordinary privileges and awarded the rank and dignity of Honorary Member by solemn decree of the sodality in 1959.

It is only in certain periods during any century (now is one) that the full power of current Speculators is apparent. In ten years time the present rulers of the Legal Establishment will be retired and the 1968 History would only be relevant as a historical document and the people who would then be in high legal office would be safe in their anonymity until publication of the next history, the Tercentenary History in 2064-8.

The secretive nature of the Speculative Society that I perceive is therefore more to do with the failure of its members to register their membership as an interest in any material written about them. Once the identity of a Speculator is established one can normally find out about which organisations the member is associated with, even down to the clubs they use, such as Burns Societies. Yet, for a sodality, the membership of which involves attending meetings for three years, there is, about ordinary members, and members who have gained extraordinary privileges, not a word.

It is conceivable that one may forget membership of a book club or a social club joined at the cost of a few pounds and used or visited at an earlier stage in ones life but to forget three years (winter Wednesdays only) of essays and summer social gatherings beggars belief.

The press in the few articles that have been published about the Speculative Society describe it as a secret or secretive society whose members guard its secrets jealously [SS14a], [SS14b] & [SS14c] and about which little is known and I would concur with that perception. More has been published in the press about me than has been published about the most exclusive society in Scotland, the Speculative Society (recent articles excepted).

A Librarian at the N.L.S. who assured me with absolute certainty that she could contact the Secretary of The Speculative Society to obtain permission for photocopying as she had extensive contacts in the Advocates Library, and Edinburgh University (where the Spec is housed), had to apologise to me because no one would admit to any knowledge of, or responsibility for The Speculative Society. The National Library of Scotland holds over seven million books and countless pamphlets yet it contains more information on the Order of the Secret Monitor and the Royal Arch Chapter of Freemasonry than it does on the Speculative Society.

The Laws of the Edinburgh Speculative Society Instituted in November 1764 certainly make no mention of the need for secrecy of membership, yet it is self-evident that such an obligation or duty applies to members. This is not surprising as Societies of this sort at this time in history did require their members to keep secrets, and a very similar Edinburgh literary society “The Speculating Society” stipulated that its members were forbidden from “**divulging what has been forbidden from the chair as being the secrets of the society under any pretence whatever**”. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Speculative Society imposes similar obligations, this could account for the lack of declarations of membership of the Spec by its members.

It would be interesting to see what changes to the original Laws (which two thirds of the membership can affect) have been made. There has obviously been a change in the original Rule 5, Section. II which states: “**No essays or questions shall be admitted, touching the Christian religion, or the political topics of the day**” [SS17] when one examines an excerpt from the “Report on the Proceedings of the 150th Session of the Speculative Society” in 1914 when Professor John Hepburn Millar, speaking in reply to a proposed toast to The Imperial Forces stated “**and if the Protestant succession has been secured, let us never forget, sir, that that fortunate state of matters is due in no small measure to our standing Army, and likewise to one who was the idol of his men, that great captain of his age – I refer to William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland**”[SS18]

The above comment is not untypical of the Spec (see also politics and the society below) and I would welcome the opportunity to explore this area in detail but sadly a Society which boasts of its aim to improve its members ability in literary improvement and public speaking seems to be reluctant to write or speak about its activities and aims to non-members.

The meetings and the Laws are divided between Literary, and Private but it seems to me that both areas are very private if not secret. The defenders of the Speculative Society in the press recently have themselves been Speculators, and argue that the Spec is an innocent debating society and not Masonic. Do debating societies class themselves as sodalities? Have unique membership numbers? Grant non-residential privileges? Receive extraordinary privileges by legally witnessed codicil? Have three ranks of membership (Ordinary, Extraordinary, & Honorary)? Achieve dominance of whatever field its membership goes on to participate in? Deny membership by non-declaration?

Right Wing.

The political views of the Spec seem to me to be, in the main, somewhat to the right of the British National Party but the 1968 History of the Speculative Society is more conservative in its claims and includes at Chapter 4 an article by J.A. David Hope Spec No 1750, entitled “CURRENT POLITICS AND THE SOCIETY’S DEBATES” from which the following is taken:

“It was at one time the practice on the last night of each session to debate the question: “Is the present government unworthy of the confidence of the country?” These motions of censure were continued regularly during the period under review until 1930, and provide a fairly accurate guide to the political bias of the Society’s members during those years. In general the majority has remained solidly conservative, but not, one imagines, so far to the right that its allegiance to the Tory Party, in or out of office, has been automatic; let the division figures of the day speak for themselves:

A table then sets of voting figures for a thirty-year period between 1900 and 1930.

In short no left wing government ever won a vote of confidence from the Society during the period, but the Conservatives lost once (1903) and in 1923 came near to doing so”.

& “Generally speaking the voting figures show that the Society was equally right wing in matters of general politics. In 1900 the question “Should a state system of Old Age Pensions be introduced in this country?” was answered in the negative, 8-3;” [SS15a] [SS15b] [SS15c] & [SS15d]

Given the general tenor of the Society’s politics as described by No 1750 (Now Lord Hope of Craighead) and the other openly right wing views of various members as set out in their Essays and Reports there can be no doubt that the Spec is right wing in character. The fact that the upper echelons of the Judiciary are composed in the main of Conservative & Unionist Speculators is disturbing. The judiciary should be divorced from politics, and this right wing cabal is in no way representative of the views of the people of Scotland.

Quasi-Masonic.

The first thing that suggests Freemasonry or a Masonic similarity to the Speculative Society is its name. Speculative Masonic organisations enjoying an upsurge at about the same time as this society did in 1764. The split into two separate types of Masonry came about when many “speculative” masons (people who were not stone-masons) joined the lodges of the “operative” or working masons and then formed their own lodges.

A name is not of itself enough to link two societies, as it is open to interpretation and can have several meanings, but the Spec has other Masonic similarities, which suggest more than a coincidental link. The first article in the 1968 History of the Speculative Society deals with the background to the formation of the Spec in 1764 and is clear that the formation of the Speculative Society was predicated on Fraternal and Masonic organisations at that time.

However the fact that Freemasonry is admired is of no consequence as there was probably much to be admired of the Freemasons as a force for enlightenment by social meeting and discussion at this time. Rather it is the fact that the membership is kept secret, in that members do not advertise their membership (despite the fact the Prince Philip is a member), and the Society is ritualistic in its activities, which gives me the impression that it bears similarities to a Masonic society.

That the Essays are sometimes ridiculous in content (“**does specsoc unbellyfeel good-think?**”), and those activities which are known about are anachronistic make me suspicious that this is an organisation deliberately cloaking itself in a mantle of farce. Could this be to mislead observers as to its actual power and influence? Just as much of Freemasonry is dismissed as being about harmless old duffers with a need to get away from the wife, and indulge in drinking with the boys with all of the silly handshakes and rolled-up trouser leg nonsense which goes with it. I think that the Masons encourage this image while not actually discouraging the other, sinister, powerful image, which has its own purpose. The recent utterances to the press by Speculator Humphrey J. Errington that the Spec was made up of “odd-balls and rouges” seems to bear out a self-deprecating subterfuge by its members.

The case of John Gibson Lockhart (pseudonym Dr Peter Morris) is at first glance a piece of such nonsense. Lockhart who eventually became Walter Scott’s son-in-law joined the Spec in 1817 and attended a meeting, which he found to be boring. He wrote about it in mildly disparaging terms in a chapter of a book entitled “Peter’s letters to his Kinfolk”, and when the identity of Lockhart as the

author was established he was shunned for breaking the ban on revealing anything of the Spec's proceedings.

The Spec met and decided to turn a portrait of Lockhart that hung in the Spec's hall to face the wall. At a meeting following this decision it was decided to modify the posthumous punishment. It was then decided that Lockhart's portrait's life sentence be commuted. It could face the hall for one night, every 100 years, on the meeting of the Spec nearest to the 100th Anniversary of his death. This was in 1954, 135 years after the event! The 1968 History relates this fact without embarrassment. [SS16]

The above episode may seem trivial but I think the Spec is sending out a clear signal to its members. If Lockhart is still being ostracised over 100 years after his death for speaking of the Spec what punishment awaits a recalcitrant member who dare mount severe criticism or attack?

It seems to me that just as the Masonic murder of William Morgan in the U.S.A. and Roberto Calvi's suicide in London send out a message to Masons who may consider disclosing the secrets of Freemasonry, the Speculative Society is sending out a message of social ostracism, even beyond the grave, to potential divulgers of the secrets of the Spec in the case of Lockhart's portrait.

Further evidence of the Spec's similarities with Masonic or fraternal brotherhoods is seen in the writings of the contributor of a major article in the 1968 History, Derrick Dunlop who states that:

“ The Society may well do something to train its members in fullness, readiness, and exactness, but its most lasting endowment to them are the friendships made within its walls from the friction of mind on mind, the free interchange of ideas, and the clash of personalities. The Speculative is a brotherhood bound by intangible ties of shared loyalty and common tradition” [SS20]

Conclusion.

It is with some sadness and regret that I am drawn to make the conclusion that the Speculative Society is an Elitist; Sexist; Racist; Secret; Right Wing; Quasi-Masonic Society. I am genuinely saddened to arrive at this conclusion as some of the most influential Scots of today are members, but the evidence available to me leaves me no option but to come to this conclusion.

I can find no redeeming feature of the Speculative Society as described in its own literature and I have little hope of any clarification from the Secretary of the Spec who rather belatedly responded to my letter to him asking for information on the identity of the members in the negative. My letter was delivered to the Secretary via his landlord, the Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Lord Sutherland of Houndwood who is less than enthusiastic to be identified as an Honorary Member. I would have welcomed clarification of the nature of the Speculative Society and the apparent inconsistencies between its stated aims of literary debate and the apparent benefits of membership.

I have found that my researches into the Speculative Society could be likened to watching a three-hour play at a theatre when the curtain was closed for the entire play, except for three or four, brief 30-Second intervals when the curtain is opened by three inches. The intervals in my analogy are the three published Centenary or Anniversary Editions of the History of the Speculative Society and other pamphlets from which I have tried to be objective in my assessment, but I have had limited, somewhat dated material with which to work. My conclusions are of necessity qualified by this limitation, which is due entirely to the secretive nature of the Speculative Society.

As soon as I set eyes on the membership roll of the Spec I was aware that the high number of Judges and Sheriffs and the large number of important businessmen therein, suggested their paths may have crossed in court. It must be the case that some unsuccessful litigants armed with such information, as was before me, would feel that they may have been unfairly dealt with. If a Claimant found out that the Judge, Advocate Depute, and Respondent in litigation all belonged to the same club, it must surely cause the Claimant concern as to the impartiality of the litigation. To discover such facts after a hearing, which had not been made known before that hearing would undoubtedly cause me concern. I informed the well-known campaigner Robbie the Pict on this basis, as I was aware of the details of some of his litigations. In the event he was as concerned as I would have been in his situation.

I am now aware that concern has been raised by Hans Koechler, Kofi Annan's personal nominee as an independent observer at the Lockerbie Trial regarding the Speculative Society, in that the **“protagonists of the Lockerbie trial (from the panel of judges and from the prosecution and defence teams) supposedly belong to this group”**. [SS21]

I share Professor Koechler's concerns, as I know as a matter of fact that the following Speculators who have been granted extraordinary privileges had some major part to play in the trial. The Lord Advocate, Peter Lovat Fraser, Spec No 1818*; Lord Coulsfield, John Taylor Cameron, Spec No 1698; Lord MacLean, Randal Norman Munro MacLean, Spec No 1736; Lord Justice General, William Douglas Cullen, Spec No 1702; Lord Osborne, Kenneth Hilton Osborne, Spec No 1721; Lord Nimmo-Smith, William Austin Nimmo Smith, Spec No 1811*.

I have been reliably informed that the following two people: Iain G. Armstrong Q.C. Advocate Depute, and David S. Burns Q.C. have been granted extraordinary privileges, but I am unable to give them Spec numbers as I have been refused post-1972 membership details by the Secretary of the Spec.

I have made my concerns known to the solicitor acting for Megrahi who seems only concerned lest he upsets one of his most vociferous supporters (Prof. R. Black) if he raises the Speculator link, because that illustrious supporter is a Spec member.

I acknowledge that the dominance of the Lockerbie Trial by members of the Speculative Society may have a logical explanation that I fail to see, and as I am not privy to all of the facts of the case it may well be that the defendants were made aware of the Speculative members' extraordinary status.

However I have to say that unless there can be a clarification of the anomalies that surround the Spec there would, in my mind at least, be a question mark over the conviction of a person who would be classed as a Wog, and, as a Libyan, (Just north of Bongo Bongo land?) someone against whom a colour bar should be maintained, by at least the majority of Speculators. In another view it may be perceived that the defendant was convicted by a panel consisting in the main of members of the same secret fraternal Speculative brotherhood who boast of the bonds of that so-called sodality.

Of course I do not understand all of the technicalities of the law and it might be that the plethora of Legal Officials who took part in the Lockerbie Trial being Speculators somehow endowed the trial with a gravitas and respectability, precisely because of the reputation of the Spec and its members. This case could be made, and was in fact made to me by the Principal of the University of Edinburgh who considered that the Spec attracted high-achieving types as extraordinary members, rather than Spec membership assisting members to achieve extraordinary success, which was my suspicion.

If I am mistaken and the membership of the Spec is not to be viewed with suspicion, is in fact reputable, synonymous with success, and impartiality. Should the Lockerbie Trial not have been held in the Halls of the Spec at the University of Edinburgh so that the world could see this fine Scottish Institution in its full glory on its home ground? It would have saved the taxpayer a great deal of money.

I would welcome some feedback on the Speculative Society from you as a Practicing Advocate. I did undertake my research at the instigation of some of your peers, and would welcome your views. I would of course be prepared to provide any clarification or E-mail file copies of source material (indicated in box brackets thus: [SS01-021]) that you require, and will treat all requests as confidential. Yours faithfully,

Thomas Minogue.

*Membership is taken from "Session 1971-2 Roll of Office Bearers and Members" and Number is projected from the last membership number in the "1968 History".