

Local Benefactors

Hamilton Nisbets at Winton

When Winton was confiscated from the Setons after their involvement in the 1715 Jacobite Uprising, it was sold by the Crown to the York Buildings Company. They were primarily interested in coal, developing mining in Tranent. When they went bankrupt in 1779, the castle was sold to Mary Hamilton of Pencaitland. Married to William Nisbet of Dirleton, their combined ancestry involved over twenty families whose intertwined histories pre-dated even the Setons.

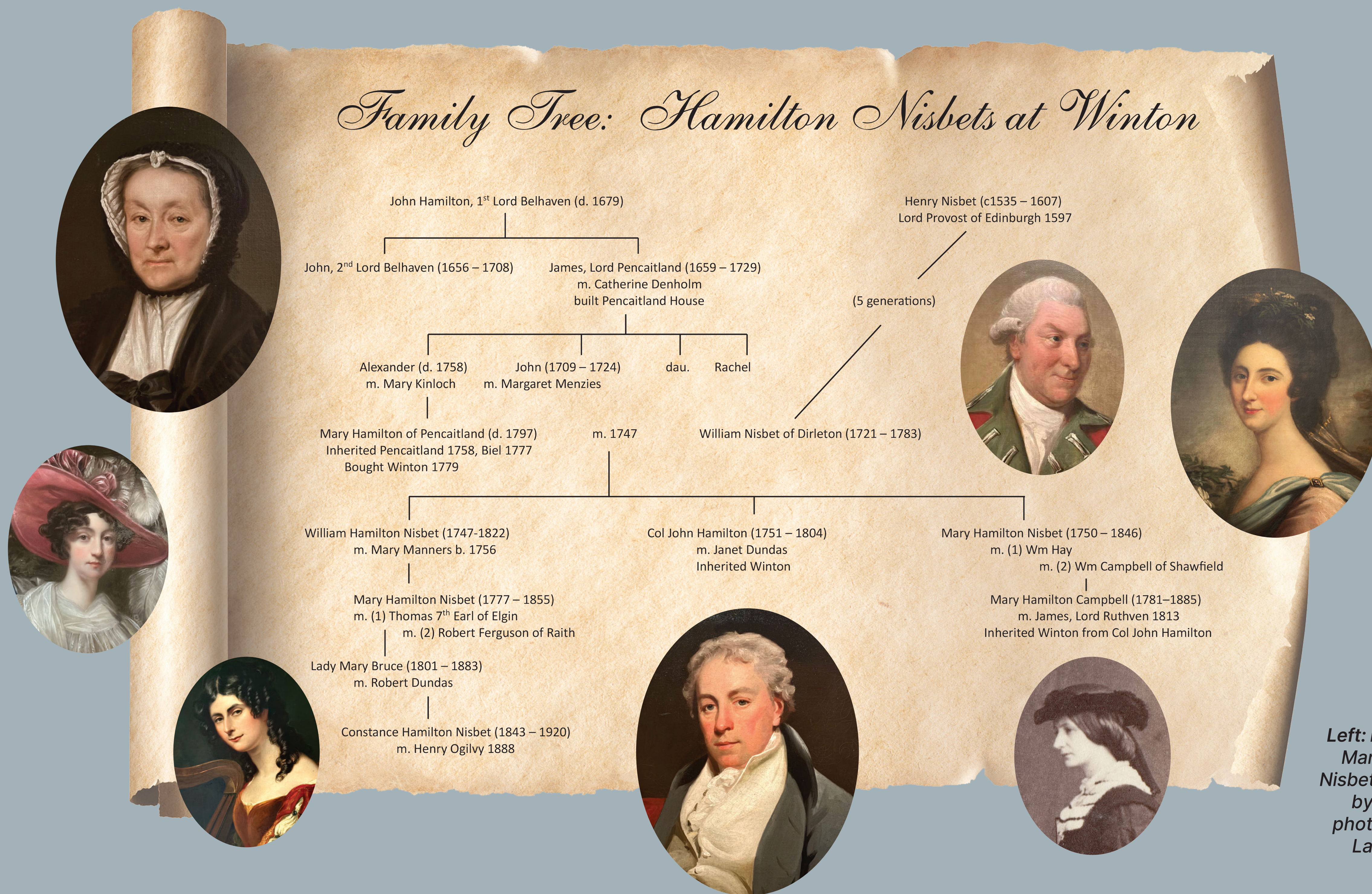
Mary gave Winton to her second son, Colonel John Hamilton, who built the northern and western extensions to the mansion house. Unfortunately, he died in 1804 before work was finished. Winton was then inherited by his niece, Lady Ruthven. She invested locally, providing a park and school in Easter Pencaitland c1870, and building the village of New Winton to provide improved housing for tenants.



Above from top: Winton as it would have looked when bought by Mary Hamilton of Pencaitland and after Colonel Hamilton's extension.

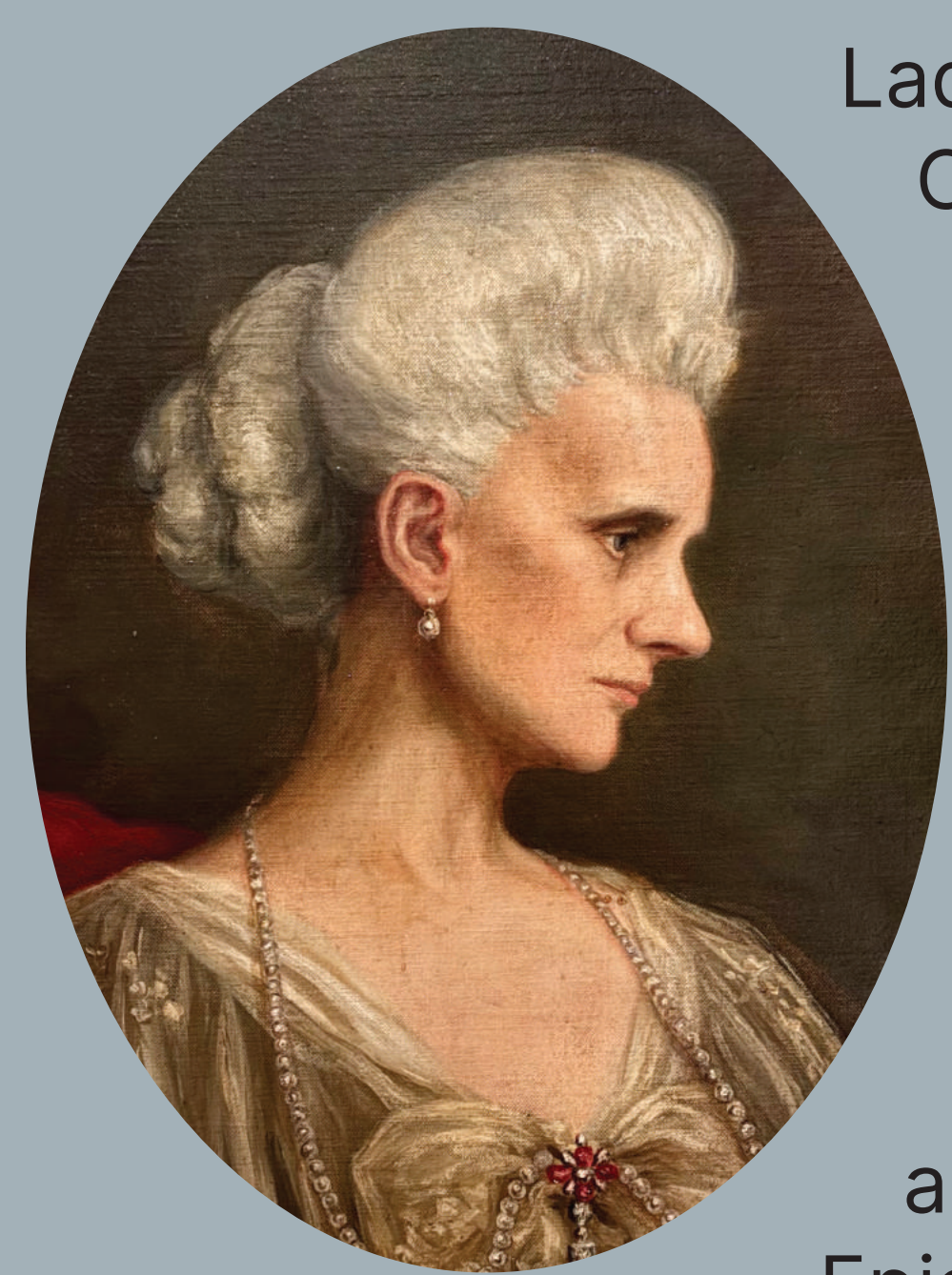


Above: Pencaitland House was home to Mary Hamilton Nisbet and her family. It was burnt in 1878, but the two pavilions remain and are now separate houses.



Left: Family History Figures (clockwise from far top left): Mary Hamilton of Pencaitland (Scottish School); William Nisbet of Dirleton and Mary Hamilton Nisbet (both painted by David Martin); Mary Hamilton Campbell (unknown photographer); Col John Hamilton (Sir Henry Raeburn); Lady Mary Bruce (Sir George Hayter); Mary Hamilton Nisbet, Countess of Elgin (Sir Henry Bone).

Constance Hamilton Nisbet



Lady Ruthven died in 1885, leaving Winton to her cousin, Constance Hamilton Nisbet. Constance married Henry Ogilvy, younger son of Sir John Ogilvy, 9th Baronet of Inverquhar, in 1888. Owning six estates between them – Winton, Biel, Archerfield, and Innerwick in East Lothian, Baldovan near Dundee, and Bloxholm in Lincolnshire – the couple settled down to life involved in these estates and interested in local affairs and people.

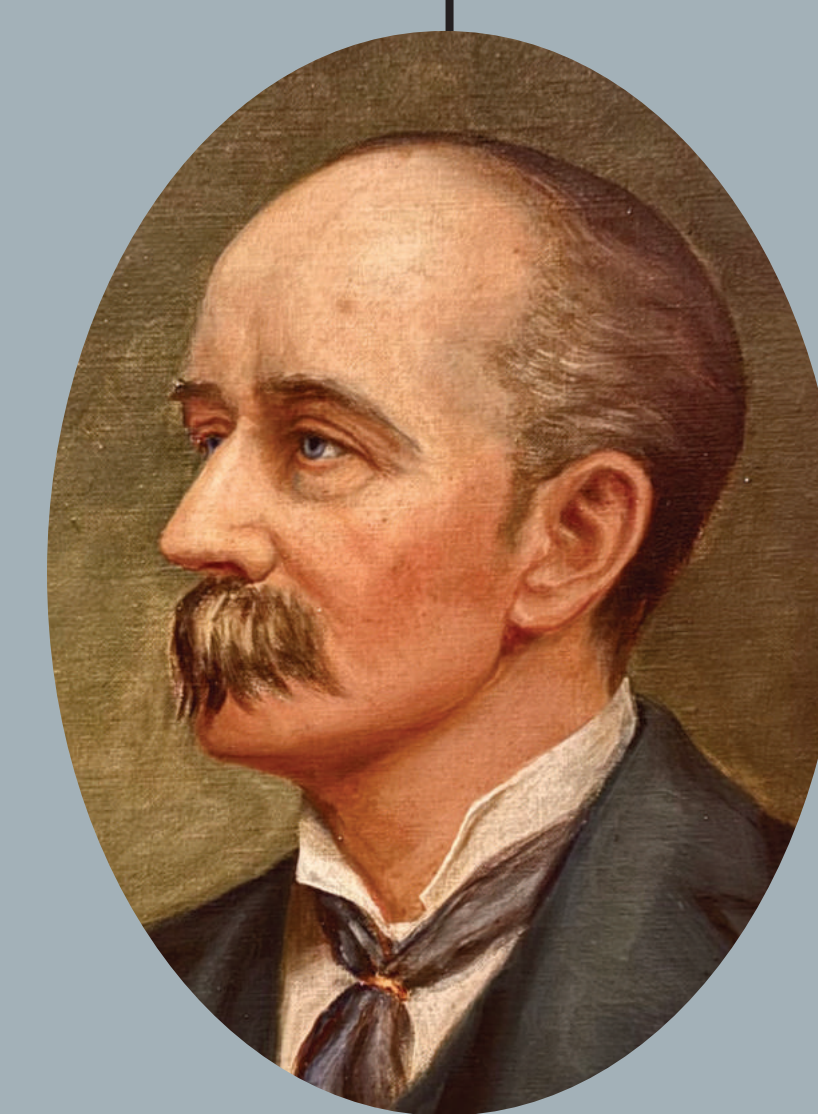
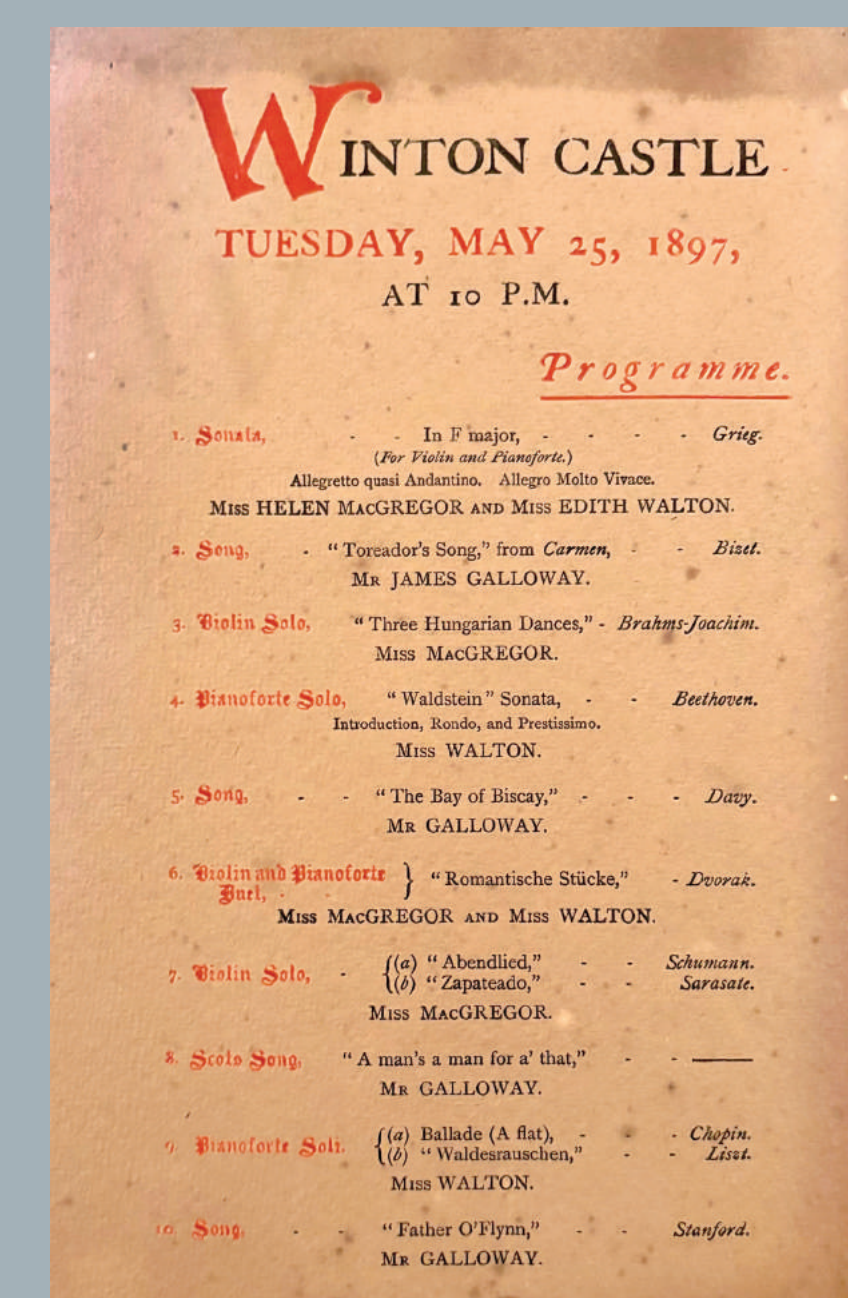
They helped provide water supplies for Dunbar and Gullane, and assisted in the development of Gullane, including Muirfield and Gullane golf courses. They were involved in building Episcopal churches and maintaining the parish ones. Their social life was considerable with house parties, balls, garden parties and concerts. Hospitality was extended to many - a total of 3600 attended the Jubilee parties on her Scottish estates – from all walks of life.

After Henry's death in 1909, Constance lived quietly at Winton, although still interested in her other estates. When she died in 1920, many tributes were paid to her generosity, to her support of the church, to her accomplishments, and to her interest in local affairs. The parish minister of Pencaitland said ...

To outsiders she might seem stiff and proud, but under great shyness there was a very humble and tender heart.

Constance left the estates of Biel and Archerfield to Lt Col JP Nisbet Hamilton Grant, and Winton and Pencaitland to her nephew, Gilbert Ogilvy.

Clockwise from left: Constance Hamilton Nisbet and Henry Ogilvy (both painted by Olive Munro); Constance and Henry's wedding cake (photographer: J Horsburgh); Winton castle concert programme, 1897.



Above: Dancing at a Hamilton Nisbet party (artist unknown). Below: Detail of the drawing room rug commissioned by Lady Ruthven in the 1850s.



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