

OUR NEW DISPLAY AT THE REG. DRIVER CENTRE

For those who are not able to see it, some account of the Trust's new display is appropriate. It is a static display which will remain in position for about 2 years and is located in the visitor centre in Christchurch Park in Ipswich. Check before visiting but at this time of year the centre is open 10.00am to 4.00pm.



The Reg. Driver Centre in Christchurch Park, April 2011.

Seven of the fourteen panels are devoted to the story of Margaret Catchpole written by Rev. Richard Cobbold. The first edition (it was a novel based on real life) was published in 1845 in 3 volumes (allowing 3 borrowers to read the book at the same time – 19th C marketing!) and it ran to another 4 editions in the next 2 years, so it was an instant success and has remained popular ever since. Next year marks the 250th anniversary of Margaret's birth and it was in Christchurch Park that she used to walk John Cobbold's younger children when they lived at the Manor House on St Margaret's Green.



The Margaret Catchpole side of the display.

The display takes the visitor through her entire life using Richard Cobbold's watercolour illustrations which were saved by the generous subscription of friends and family.

Three panels are devoted to Felix Thornley Cobbold (1841-1909) whose gift of Christchurch Mansion to the Borough allowed the purchase of the park itself and a further four panels tell of the family's contributions to brewing and Ipswich Town Football Club.



The reverse side featured Felix Thornley Cobbold, the brewery and ITFC.

During the inauguration weekend the original watercolours were on show together with the Trust's collection of scissor-cut paper Valentines by Richard's mother, Elizabeth Cobbold (1764-1824). To augment the latter there was also an excellent demonstration of paper-cutting given by the well known Suffolk artist Lois Cordelia, who uses a scalpel, and her mother, Erika who practices *scherschnit* (scissor-cutting), exactly the technique used by Elizabeth 200 years earlier.



Lois Cordelia, right and Erika Bulow-Osborne demonstrating paper-cutting.

The display was designed by Martin Surgey of Lifechart, and David Mitchell who is a Margaret Catchpole scholar was kind enough to be our story consultant. Below are some of the comments received.

There is a very good display in the Reg. Driver Centre in Christchurch Park which opened yesterday.

The Catchpole exhibition was charming, and I did not see one person who did not seem to be delighted to be there, and had nice things to say about the Trust – and how lucky we were in Suffolk to be the beneficiaries.

Thank you so much for inviting the Ipswich Society to the opening of the Margaret Catchpole exhibition on Friday. The exhibition is quite stunning, both visually and its content, and forms an excellent attraction at the Reg. Driver Centre.

The Trust very much appreciated the decision of the Ipswich Society to use the occasion of our opening weekend for the dedication of their blue plaque to Felix Thornley Cobbold, the plaque being in a prominent position on the outside of the Reg. Driver Centre. Perfect!