

Patron: Lord Cobbold DL  
Ivry, Lady Freyberg

## SIR THOMAS PLUMER (1753-1824)

August 2017

**Sir Thomas Plumer** (#855 on the family tree) came to public attention largely because of his success in two important legal cases; those of Sir Thomas Rumbold, Governor of Madras in 1783 and of Warren Hastings, whose case has the distinction of being one of the longest in British legal history between 1788 and 1795.

He was born in October 1753 in Ironmonger Lane, London, son of Thomas Plumer, a London wine merchant, of Lilling Hall in Yorkshire. He was despatched to Eton and later University College, Oxford where he was Vinerian Scholar in 1777, the same year as he entered Lincoln's Inn being called to the Bar in 1778. He was elected a fellow of University College in 1780 and was awarded the Bachelor of Civil Law degree in 1783

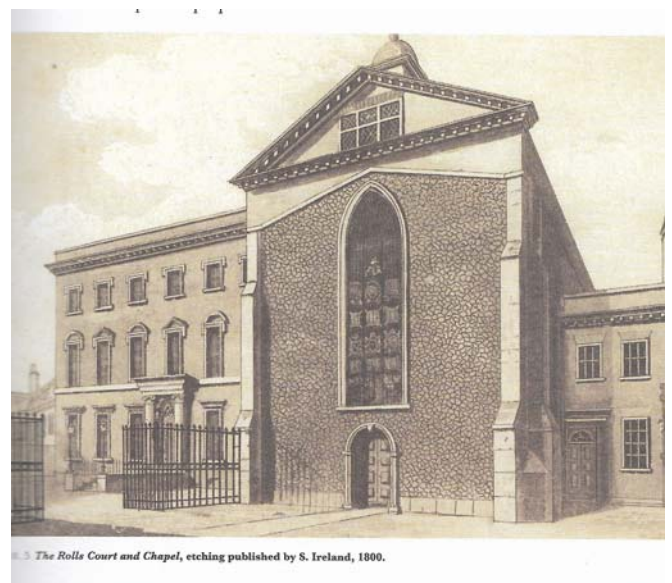
In addition to his successful defence of Sir Thomas Rumbold and Warren Hastings he also successfully defended Viscount Melville against impeachment in 1806 and assisted in the defence of the Prince of Wales the same year. By 1807 he was Solicitor General, had been knighted and was the MP for Downton in Wiltshire. He became Attorney General in 1812 and Vice Chancellor of England the following year. 1818 saw him appointed Master of the Rolls, a post in which he served until he died in 1824. He was buried in the Rolls Chapel on 1<sup>st</sup> April that year.

His granddaughter, **Fanny Hannah** married **Sir Harry Parkes** (#849/50) and his great grandson became the famous WWI Field Marshal **Lord Plumer** (#2546). It was the latter's daughter, **Eleanor Mary Plumer** (#2555), champion of women's education, who pioneered St Andrew's Hall (1927-1931) and later became Principal of St. Anne's College, Oxford from 1940 to 1953. Amongst St. Anne's recent graduates was **Jack Cobbold** (#1038)

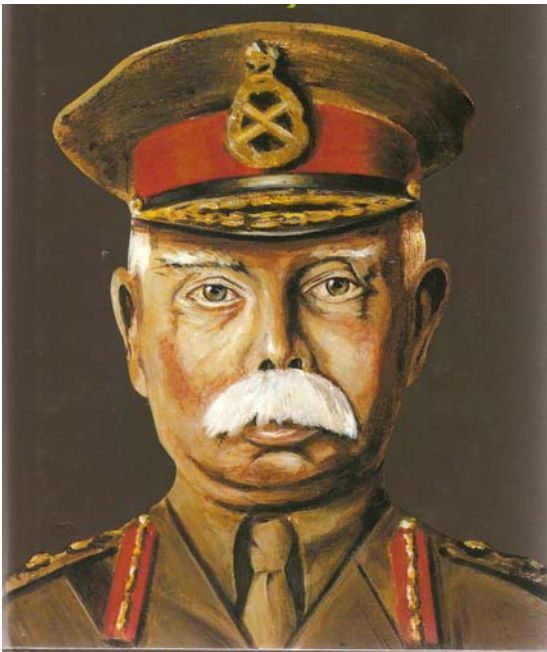
A fine portrait of Sir Thomas (artist uncertain) came on the market recently. The provenance was good in that the picture was identified as coming from his mother's family, the Thompsons of Kirby Hall in Yorkshire. It will be seen from the many connections mentioned above that The Cobbold Family History Trust would have been a most appropriate final resting place for the portrait but it was beyond the Trust's means. However, the story has a happy ending; the picture was purchased by a family member and its safety is assured.



Sir Thomas Plumer



The Rolls Chapel 1800



Field Marshal Lord Plumer



Eleanor Mary Plumer