

Patron: Lord Cobbold DL
Ivry, Lady Freyberg

THE COBBOlds: THE DYNASTY THAT SHAPED SUFFOLK

January 2020

We reproduce here a one-and-a-half-page item from the East Anglian Daily Times of 4th January 2020, by Steve Russell. We hasten to point out that the headline is his wording not ours! He was prompted to write it by the Trust's 15th birthday which, like us, he felt was an achievement of which we could be proud.



Feature

The Cobbolds: The dynasty that shaped Suffolk

During the Brexit kerfuffle at the tail end of 2019 it was easy to overlook an anniversary pertinent to our neck of the woods. **Steve Russell** on a historic family that made East Anglia a better and brighter place

You'll doubtless have heard about the Cobbolds - the family once famous for its Ipswich brewery and pubs. And its stewardship of Ipswich Town Football Club during the glory years... and some seasons not so thrilling.

It was "Mr John" Cobbold - its eccentric chairman for nearly two decades from 1967 - who put things in perspective during a trying time on the pitch. "There is no crisis at Ipswich until the white wise runs out in the boardroom."

Mr John is but one colourful Cobbold from the past.

It was late-ish in 2004 that The Cobbold Family History Trust launched, aiming to encourage the study of, and research into, family history.

The driving force is Devon-based Anthony Cobbold. To mark the 15th birthday, we're taking a look at four Cobbolds. (Thanks to Anthony for most of the information.)

Lady Evelyn Cobbold, 1867 to 1963

The first British female convert to Islam on record as having made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Daughter of the hard-up 7th Earl of Dunmore, she wintered regularly in Africa as a child, with Algerian and Egyptian staff, and became immersed in the culture of the Arab-Muslim world.

In 1891 she married John Dupuis Cobbold, from the brewing dynasty, and lived in Ipswich. Evelyn struggled to settle. She did much travelling abroad - without her husband - and they separated in the 1920s.

The aristocrat was in her mid-60s when she determined to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Not easy for a foreign, female, convert. She wrote a book that made her something of a celebrity.

William Facey co-wrote a biography for a 2008 edition of "Pilgrimage to Mecca". He explained that "as a lone female Muslim she was able to do something no English traveller before her had been able to do: to describe the secluded female side of domestic life in Mecca and Medina."

One of her children, Col John "Ivan" Murray Cobbold, put up the money for Ipswich Town to become a professional football club in 1966.

Ivan and Lady Blanche Cavendish's sons, John and Patrick, both served as chairmen of the club - upholding the sense of Corinthian spirit.

Felix Thornley Cobbold, 1841 to 1909

The youngest son of John Chevallier Cobbold and Lucy Partison went to Eton, Oxford's Trinity College and King's College, Cambridge.

He returned to Suffolk, to brewer Cobbold & Co, after a brother died. When another

John Chevallier Cobbold, 1797 to 1882

The Bury St Edmunds Grammar School pupil became a dock commissioner, treasurer of Ipswich and East Suffolk Hospital, and Ipswich's MP from 1847 to 1869.

He was chairman of Eastern Union Railway and a director of Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds Railway. "It was John Chevallier Cobbold who kick-started the development of Felixstowe. He bought land there... and built the first hotel."

Francis Edward Cobbold, 1853 to 1935

Francis was just 14 when he became a ship's apprentice and

sailed south - escaping cannibals and a hurricane, and arriving in Australia in 1873.

He became a ranch manager and surveyor. Francis prospered - a huge sheep station in Queensland was one interest.

Much of his estate was left to The Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association, to help needy Suffolk folk.

"RUKBA is now Independent Age. In their accounts published at the end of 2004 the FE Cobbold Trust had a value of 19.5milion."

See www.cobboldfht.com for details of the trust. Anthony has taken care of almost all running expenses to date, but it's hoped an endowment fund (donations welcomed) will guarantee its future.

Thanks to Felix Thornley Cobbold... Christchurch Mansion at the time of its transition from private to public ownership in the early 1890s

Picture: THE COBOLD FAMILY HISTORY TRUST

Flashback to 2011 when 100 years of the Cobbold legacy was marked at Christchurch Mansion. Duty officer Sadia Sheri looks at the portrait of Felix Thornley Cobbold

Picture: WENDY TURNER

Above: Dr Thomas Spencer Cobbold. Expert in botany and parasitic worms

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Top left: Francis Edward Cobbold. Much of his estate was left to The Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association, to help needy Suffolk folk

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Bottom left: Lady Evelyn Cobbold. Adventurous traveller; convert to Islam; made pilgrimage to Mecca

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breathed his last, Felix took his place with banker Bacon, Cobbold & Co.

Felix (one-time Liberal MP for the town) donated land to Ipswich for St Clement's Baths; gave a clock and set of bells to St Clement's Church; and gifted 45 acres for Gippeswyk Park.

In 1895, it looked as if Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich would be knocked down. "Felix offered to buy the mansion and give it to Ipswich if the borough could find the relatively modest £15,000 being asked for the park. The deal was done..."

His farmland was left to the county. Today, the Felix Thornley Cobbold Agricultural Trust aims to improve agriculture – in particular by educating farmers and young people in developments

and techniques.

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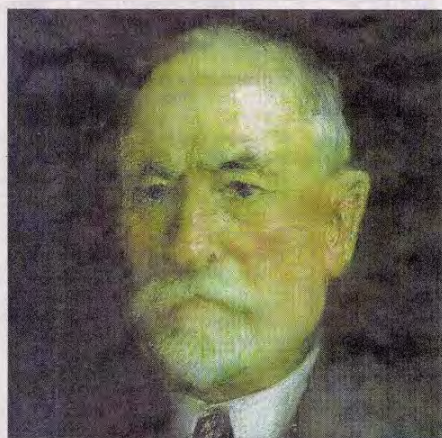


John Chevallier Cobbold: Long-time Ipswich MP and kick-started the development of Felixstowe

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