

THREE COBBOLD HOMES

Mar 2011

Two events prompt me to write about three Cobbold homes. Firstly, this year is the 75th anniversary of the opening of Holywells Park to the public in 1936. (In Victorian times the property was known as Holy Wells but today the single word spelling is widely adopted). Secondly, I received a letter pointing out that some writers had been confused as to the order in which these three homes were occupied and to my personal dismay, I realised it was not clear to me either.

The Brewery was founded by Thomas Cobbold (1680-1752), a Maltster from Bury St Edmunds, at Harwich in 1723. His son, also Thomas (1708-1767) came into the business and due to the poor quality of the water in Harwich they moved it to The Cliff in Ipswich in 1746 and this is when the Cliff House (now The Brewery Tap, and very good it is too) was built and first occupied. Prior to this (but from what date we do not know) the family lived at the Manor House on St Margaret's Green and they continued to live here until 1798. It was from the Manor House that Margaret Catchpole stole John Cobbold's horse in 1797 and from the circular pond in nearby Christchurch Park that she rescued one of the Cobbold children.

In 1798 the founder's grandson, John (1745-1835), (famed for his two wives Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II and 22 children) moved the family to Cliff House, but he and his parents had been buying parcels of land in that part of Ipswich since the 1740s and in 1811 John was able to buy Pitt's Farmhouse which formed the basic U shape of the Holywells mansion which he built in 1814.

John's son, John Chevallier Cobbold (1797-1882) landscaped the park with the introduction of such exotic species as Bamboos, Rhododendrons, Palms and Magnolias and dramatically developed the house, later described as "classical Victorian with colonial veranda and shutters." In the park was a skating lake and walkways with ornamental features.

Many Cobbold family events were celebrated in the park. A party was held to mark the marriage of John Dupuis Cobbold (1861-1929) to Lady Evelyn Murray (1867-1963) in 1891, though they had actually been married previously in Cairo; the end of the Great War was celebrated in July 1919 and the brewery's bi-centenary in 1923 was marked by a huge party for employees, tenants and their families.

When John Dupuis died in 1929 Holywells was sold to Lord Woodbridge who subsequently gave it to the Borough of Ipswich. Although the park was opened to the public in 1936, sadly the house was demolished in 1962 except for the stable block and the conservatory which are listed Grade II and await restoration.

Anthony Cobbold 2011

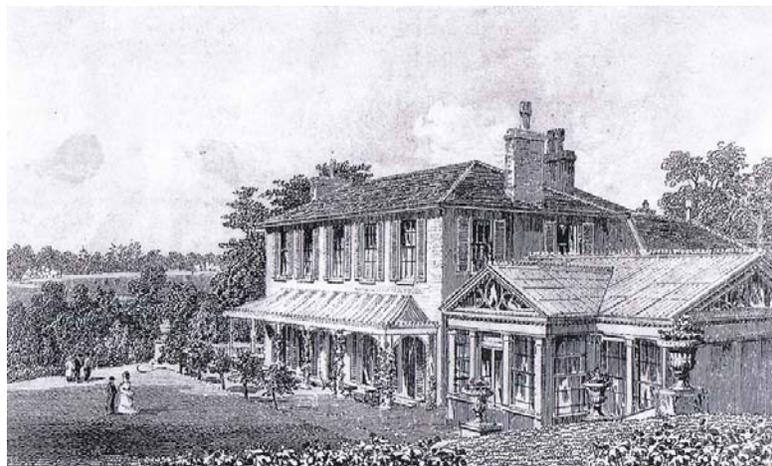
For some of the content of this item I am indebted to Dr John Blatchly and Jane Dismore who is writing a book on Pamela Hambro née Cobbold (1900-1932)



The Old Manor House, about 1905, over a hundred years after it was a Cobbold home.



Cliff House, now The Brewery Tap, built with the first brewery in 1746 was not so over-shadowed then as it is now by the replacement building of 1896.



HOLY WELLS NEAR IPSWICH.
THE RESIDENCE OF J. C. COBBOLD, ESQ.

Holy Wells in the time of J C Cobbold shows its “colonial veranda and shutters”