

Cobbolds at Caius

Many families have developed powerful links with Caius by sending their sons (and now daughters) here for many generations.

There is of course, no special treatment for relatives of Caians: admissions are based on the merit of the applicant alone, as judged by strictly impartial interviewers. Sadly, many sons and daughters of Caians do not succeed in winning places, but every year, some delight their elders by maintaining family traditions that are a great source of pride and pleasure.

Family loyalty has been hugely beneficial to the College.

Around 1500, Dame Anne Scroope, the last descendant of Edmund Gonville's brother, left us the land at West Road where Harvey Court and the Stephen Hawking Building now stand.

The Locks, one of the greatest Caian dynasties, include a sequence of five consecutive generations. J B Lock (1867) was the legendary Senior Bursar who guided the College's fortunes for 32 years around the turn of the twentieth century.

The Myers family from New Zealand can claim four consecutive generations, including our greatest living benefactor, Douglas Myers (1958), his father, grandfather and son. The Thimont and Vigrass families have notched up six members apiece in recent years, but no Caian dynasty, so far as we are aware, can compete with the Cobbold family,

Thomas Cobbold started the family brewing business in Harwich in 1723 and family members retained control of it for the next 266 years. His grandson, John Cobbold took over the brewery in 1767, when he was only 22, and lived to 90. It was John's prodigious energy that really laid the foundations for the dynasty. He married Elizabeth, who bore him fifteen children in sixteen years. Finding himself a widower at 45, he promptly found himself another Elizabeth (celebrated in fiction as Mrs Leo Hunter in Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*) who bore him another seven children.

John's twentieth child, Revd Richard Cobbold (1814) was perhaps the most celebrated of the Caius Cobbolds, a gifted writer and illustrator who produced a classic Victorian bestseller, *The History of Margaret Catchpole*. This was the almost true tale of a young servant girl who worked for his mother. Margaret's romantic attachment to a rogue led her through a series of spectacular adventures. She stole a horse from the Cobbolds (a capital offence at the time), was reprieved, thanks to her mistress, escaped from gaol, tried to flee to Holland with her lover, was recaptured and sentenced to transportation to the penal colony of Australia. There, she finally achieved wealth, success and respectability in her new home.

Richard Cobbold's son, two grandsons and a great-grandson followed him to Caius, as well as two cousins and two nephews. One of those nephews was Dr Rowland Townshend Cobbold (1838) who has, to date, been followed by his son, Revd Rowland Francis Cobbold (1876), grandson, Rowland Hope Cobbold (1923), great-grandson, Anthony Cobbold (1955), and great-great-grandson, Humphrey Cobbold (1983). Humphrey married Nicola Hacker (1984), so their children are blessed with a double portion of Caius genes and no-one will blame them if they turn up for their Caius interviews under assumed names!



A Cobbold Family group from 1936 includes five Caians

Now retired from a successful business career, Anthony has spent a great deal of time and energy in setting up the Cobbold Family History Trust, to preserve the pictures, books, papers, artefacts and ephemera connected with this remarkable family for future generations. The latest acquisition of the Trust, subject to a successful appeal for funds, is a set of 34 astonishingly beautiful watercolours mainly painted by Richard Cobbold himself, which were used to illustrate *The History of Margaret Catchpole*.

There is much more to the Cobbold family than our 21 Caius Cobbolds. Other branches have arguably achieved even greater heights of power, pioneering, scholarship, wealth and philanthropy. No fewer than 48 Cobbolds died in two World Wars. Anthony plans to collect and conserve material for a family history book and a comprehensive archive.

As so often happens, the family's multifarious connections with Caius have proved to be mutually beneficial. It is impossible to quantify the benefits received in the course of more than two centuries by our 21 Caius Cobbolds, but the survivors maintain an active involvement with the current Caius community. Anthony Cobbold has decided to name R3 in Tree Court, a room that has strong family associations, and he hopes that his family's very special links with the College will continue for many generations to come.



Rev Richard Cobbold (1814).



Three generations at the Gate of Virtue: Humphrey Cobbold (1983), Anthony Cobbold (1955) and Rowland Hope Cobbold (1923)



2nd Lt Charlie Cobbold (1912), Royal Field Artillery, born 6 February 1893, killed in action 3 October 1916.

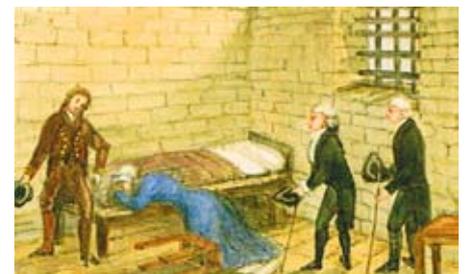
Illustrations from *The History of Margaret Catchpole*



Ipswich, site of the Cobbold brewery from 1746.



Margaret is apprehended, trying to sell the stolen horse in London.



News of Margaret's reprieve is brought to her in her prison cell.



Margaret makes a rope out of sheets and escapes from the prison.



Will Laud resists arrest and defends Margaret but is killed in the process..



The Hawkesbury River, to the North of Sydney, where Margaret settles.