

Patron: Lord Cobbold DL
Ivry, Lady Freyberg
Nicholas Cobbold OBE

“IPSWICH BELONGS TO THE COBBOLDS”

Nov 2012

“Ipswich belongs to the Cobbolds” was an election taunt not unfamiliar in the third quarter of the 19th Century to which I am glad to say the family always replied “No, the Cobbolds belong to Ipswich.”

I was reminded of this as it was quoted in a rather unusual book acquired by the trust recently. Originally the book had been a club or society handbook listing members and rules but the owner, a Mr Elkington of Ipswich, had pasted galley proofs from the East Anglian Daily Times onto the pages to record what he called ‘Memoirs’ of J C Cobbold, T C Cobbold*, H G Bristo and, added as an afterthought, Frank Ransome. How he had access to galley proofs, dated 7th October 1882 is not known but perhaps he was an employee of the paper. He certainly had a developed civic interest because the first 28 pages of his book record the death and subsequent funeral of the High Steward of the Borough, John Chevallier Cobbold (#114) who had also been Member of Parliament for Ipswich for 21 years.



John Chevallier Cobbold (1797 – 1882)

The account is a full one, recounting in astonishing detail not only the lives and business dealings of his father and grandfather, but also stories of the quite extraordinary electoral shenanigans which seem to have been common-place at that time. The funeral itself was a huge affair; some 8 carriages carrying the chief mourners with a further two carrying domestic staff and, following on foot, large numbers of members representing, inter alia, The Shipwrecked Seaman’s Society, The Licensed Victuallers’ Association, The Independent Order of Oddfellows, The Ancient Order of Foresters, The Ipswich Waterworks Company, The Mechanics’ Institute and Gentlemen of the Learned Professions. The Corporation of Harwich



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(headed by two Mace-Sergeants with veiled mace), The Corporation of Ipswich (headed by the Town Crier and two Mace-Sergeants with veiled mace) and 16 Clergy preceded the funeral car. There followed some 21 private carriages and, again on foot, employees of Bacon, Cobbold and Co.'s Bank, Cliff Brewery and the timber-yard and farm.

Those who know Ipswich will readily appreciate the scale of this event when they learn that the procession started from Holy Wells, moved to St Mary-le-Tower and finished at the Cemetery where John Chevallier Cobbold was laid to rest in a solid oak coffin fashioned by his own carpenters.

With this book the Trust also acquired the text of two sermons preached in memory of the Borough's recently deceased High Steward at the time of his funeral. In sharp contrast to today's practice the name of the departed gentleman was not mentioned once!

*Thomas Clement Cobbold (#191)