

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

WILLIAM NEVILL COBBOLD – POEMS 1

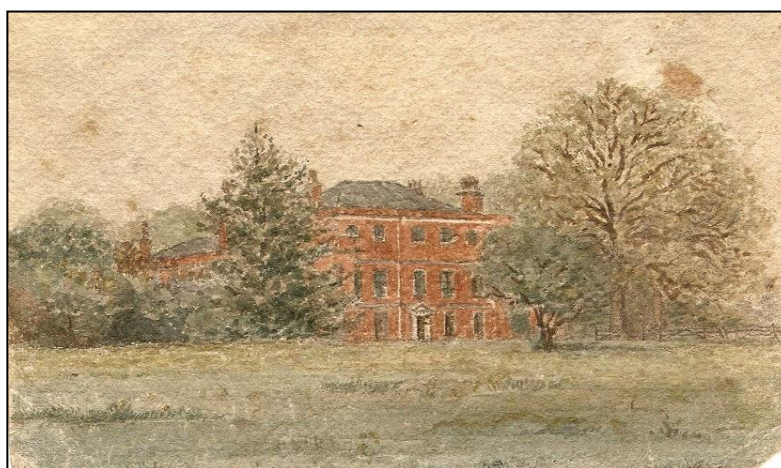
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Back in 2008 (see “Features Archive” – October) we wrote about W N (Nuts) Cobbold (1863-1922; #289 in the tree) who played football for England between 1883 and 1887. As well as being an outstanding sportsman he was a classicist who ran a crammer at West Wrattling Park, near Cambridge, to help young men gain commissions in the Army before and during WWI. When not coaching the school’s football, cricket and tennis teams he chose to write verse, unusually, in Latin as well as English!



The Trust has a number of his verses and, in the absence of a willing publisher, has decided to print one a month in Cobbwebs. For our first series we have chosen domestic topics but will probably move on to his military rhymes next year to mark the centenary of the start of WWI.

Whilst his odes show great affection for his pupils and his family it seems that their Seelyham, Ghillie, was ‘top dog’ as we shall



see in later excerpts. We don’t for one minute claim that his poetry is great but we do enjoy the very English, self deprecating way it brings a smile to our lips.

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My wife on the making of Odes.

Alas! Alas! I'm very sad,
My husband dear 's fast going mad,
He writes an ode each single day,
Did I say ode? That's not his way:
Each day he writes twelve odes at least,
But what's far worst (he is a beast)
He makes me listen to them all,
Tho' well he knows how much they pall.
His odes are here, his odes are there:
His odes, his odes are everywhere;
There's nothing else one ever hears,
I'd give a lot to close my ears.
These odious odes, they ne'er will cease,
Till kindly death doth him release.
He's odes on dogs and odes on war,
And odes which like a torrent pour
From off his pen, he's done four score
In just three days and thirsts for more;
What can I do? Ah, wretched me!
I soon shall be as mad as he.

