

A Communion of Cobbolds

This is a brief travelogue of two Cobbolds from Canada visiting England on the occasion of the 100th anniversary, and an associated gathering of the Cobbold Clan, to honour Felix Thornley Cobbold in the Ipswich Christchurch Mansion Museum on 16 October 2009.

Entrance Hymn

Tuesday Off we go.....13 October

We, Richard T. C. (Dick) Cobbold and wife Jean (Jeannie) Cobbold (nee Potter), departed Ottawa and Toronto airports at 00dark on 13 October heading for London Heathrow airport. Philippa Burford (nee Cobbold), sister of Dick, met the arriving visitors and successfully navigated the rental car to her home in Wimbledon, accompanied by the dulcet tones of “Sheila” the GPS unit carried over by the visitors. Sheila had her own chosen path for the drive but with Dick, as driver, managing to bounce off only a few curbs with his “other-side North American driving proclivities” and following Philippa’s adroit shortcuts, Sheila’s incessant “*recalculating*” eventually converged at the chosen destination.



At “Stonehenge” (1500 B.C. – Somewhat later)

Wednesday.....A quick glass (it was past midnight by now), to bed, rise and breakfast, and it was off to Devon for Dick and Jeannie for an overnight visit with first cousin Constance Hiller (nee Cobbold, daughter of oldest of three Cobbold brothers Reynold, Robert and Temple, Dick’s father, sons all of Christian Chevallier and Olive Cobbold). Along the way the indomitable Sheila steered us through London’s SW outskirts, A3, M3, M25, M3 & A3 again etc onto the plains of Hampshire and Wiltshire, a touristy/photo stopover at Stonehenge, and on to the west of Honiton, the Colestocks home of cousin Constance and George Hiller, Stomorage by name. A delightful evening ensued with tea rapidly moving to gins (several), wine (much) complementing an elegant dinner and discourse on matters Cobbold, families, grandchildren, military history and the world’s problems. George shared his considerable knowledge and remarkable memory of military and other matters as we sampled his brandy while humbly agreeing to solving weighty worldly issues at a subsequent session.



Constance, George, Jeannie & Dick

Introductory Prayers

*Thursday.....*with an early viewing of Constance's wonderful paintings, including her last remaining masterpiece from her Venice-period underarm, and fueled by her marmalade and Devon-fresh farm eggs we launched off to Suffolk. We followed George's suggestion to visit the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Museum at RNAS Yeovilton, where Dick's uncle Dick Fell, RN was at one time Commander Air. The museum houses a great collection of old, recent and contemporary naval aircraft, as well as one of the few surviving Concorde's, all in a large well illustrated/annotated visitor-friendly facility. Back with "Sheila" it was onto A3, M3, M25, M11, A14/140 etc to Bungay to "camp" with Dick's sister Ann, with Philippa joining us in Ann's small, thoroughly modernized home at 3 Castle Lane. The house was formerly the home of our dearly departed (1997) mother, Phoebe Cobbold (nee Fell), former wife of Temple, and mother of four; the four siblings including my brother Christopher Chevallier Cobbold, another Canadian resident, and all four of us born in New Zealand.



At RNAS Yeovilton

Offertory

*Friday.....*a mid morning walk on Bungay/Waveney Common with Ann's elegant Lurcher, Zephi, lunch and a walkabout the town followed. We had an offering for the Cobbold Family Trust (see below....Rattlesden Parish Records) in our suitcase, as Dick and Jeannie drove off to join Philip Hope-Cobbold and his wife Raewyn in Glemham Hall to dress for the communion of Cobbolds and a subsequent overnight stay. Philip and Raewyn lead an extremely busy life, directing staff, the affairs of (e)state, organizing events, keeping Glemham Hall alive, eg 400 windows being painted this year, and a significant social calendar. Philip's two friendly black Labrador retrievers greeted us at the door and stayed close by as we chatted and then prepared for the evening ahead, with

Philip expertly driving the back roads into Ipswich and conveniently finding parking adjoining Christchurch Mansion.

Communion of the faithful (Cobbold relatives and friends) in Ipswich

*Friday 16 October 2009 6pm.....*and yea a call to assemble the flock to commune and congregate to honor Felix Thornley Cobbold was heard far and wide. One Anthony Cobbold, he of the Cobbold Family Trust, did send the message far and wide. Anthony's consummate skills and powers of communication did indeed assemble many Cobbolds (some say 34 strong) and others with names and bloodline, or history lineage linkings. Friends too, such as the Mayor of Ipswich, Rosalind Thomas, author of "To Suffolk with Love, The Life of Felix Thornley Cobbold" and Canon Charles of nearby St Mary-Le-Tower.



Mayor of Ipswich, Lord David Cobbold, Anthony Cobbold and sister-in-law, Judith Cobbold (in background)

The Christchurch Mansion Museum curator greeted the assembled congregation and on behalf of the Cobbold Family Trust. Lord David Cobbold and Anthony Cobbold welcomed all and paid homage to Felix on this the 100th anniversary of a great Cobbold person (may he rest-in-peace; October 16 1909), a lawyer, a Cambridge scholar, Fellow and Bursar Kings College, an MP, a benefactor, defender of those challenged by agricultural misfortune or other circumstance, a former Mayor and Councillor of Ipswich.

Among the multitude also present a Mr. Duffy, he of the Chevallier connection, and the farthest afield visiting from Dunedin NZL. His Worship, resplendent with chain of office, also extended his best wishes and expressed heartfelt thanks to the memory of Felix for his generous contributions to the town of Ipswich, its Suffolk surrounds and peoples.

The Felix Cobbold exhibition was off to a great start. Soon, taking bread and with wine in hand, the faithful mingled and met, purviewed and procured the books and memorabilia assembled in Felix' honour, while gazing at the magnificent life-sized painting of Felix Thornley Cobbold and the museum's fine collection of Constable, Gainsborough, Picasso and impressionist, much from the considerable beneficial bequest of Felix and his enduring trusts.



Caroline Taylor (nee Cobbold), Raewyn Hope-Cobbold, Owen Duffy and Anthony Cobbold

The Cobbold clan and friends then moved to sup in Church's Bistro, by way of St Mary-le-Tower, where the Vicar's assistant/verger showed and explained the Cobbold churchly connections. A standing buffet was enjoyed by all.



Jeannie (Potter) Cobbold, Philippa (Cobbold) Burford, Ann (Cobbold) Bagnoud, Maureen Fell.

In the margins:

- at least five known Richard Cobbolds in England on that weekend (Devon-1, Ipswich-3, elsewhere-1, Lord Cobbold and Lady Chrissie's son)
- Lord David Cobbold briefly took flying training in Saskatchewan, Canada in mid 50s
- Dick took flying training on the same Harvard aircraft in Alberta in 59/60
- Dick and Jeannie carried a special package for Anthony Cobbold....family genealogy research papers and a package of fine Kenyan coffee beans from Peter Cobbold in Nova Scotia, and
- By our count there are now approximately 40 Cobbolds in Canada

*Amen.....*It shall not pass but that the love and travails of Anthony Cobbold in preparing this communion of Cobbolds was indeed exemplary and good. From him came his kith from Plymouth surrounds in preparing and serving bread and wine, his own organizational prowess, his dedication and purse committed to the cause, and his knowledge of names and matters Cobbold being indeed profound.

Post Communion

*Saturday.....*after a night's rest in a sumptuous deep downy four poster as guests of Philip Hope-Cobbold, laird of Glemham and Raewyn, she of the determined skilled organizational zeal, "the one whom Philip must truly obey" and Dick and Jeannie bade farewell, once again fuelled by Raewyn's croissants, marmalade and New Zealand Maluka honey. Raewyn, another New Zealander, returns to those antipode isles each year in March or thereabouts, and if Philip behaves, he is invited every second year!.

*Rattlesden Parish Record.....*We met Anthony at Christchurch Mansion to convey an appropriate offering from certain Canadian Cobbolds, namely my brother Christopher and his wife, Betty, a presentation to the Cobbold Family Trust. This gift was a copy of "Notes on the History of The Church and Parish of Rattlesden, County of Suffolk, Copy of the Parish Registers from 1558 to 1758" by Rev. J.R. Olorenshaw, B.A., given by Felix Cobbold to his nephew, and my Grandfather, Christian Chevallier Cobbold on New Years day, 1901, and passed on by Christian to his son Temple, father of Philippa, Ann (Merible Ann), Christopher and me, also all of NZL birth. A copy of a letter from Felix mentioning a brief family tree is also in the hands of Anthony and the Trust, with the original passed from Christian to Temple and then to me, to be placed in the Trust anon.



Dick - Felix T. Cobbold portrait

A visit with more Cobbold kith and kin ensued with Sheila steering the party of 4 (Philippa, Ann, Dick and Jeannie) toward Wisbech in the Fens. Here we met Philippa and husband David's (rip) progeny, including: daughter, Alison (husband Marysh couldn't make it while tending to Zygggy, one of their 5 in Nottingham) along with Tadek, Ozzie, Kasia and Stani, and her son, Jason and wife, Heather, with offspring Elizabeth and Alex. After a wonderful meal and great family time, we returned to Bungay where once again Dick and Jeannie, along with Philippa, camped with Ann.



At Jason & Heather's home in Wisbech.



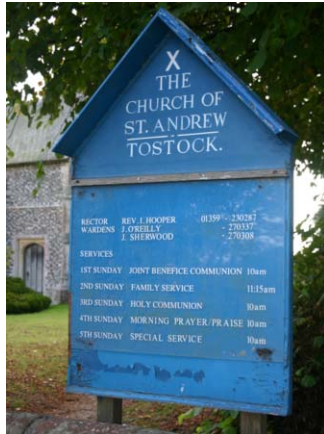
At Ann's in Bungay.

Final Blessing and Dispatch

*Sunday.....*the return to London was by way of the Cobbold past. First came a brief stop at the church in Wortham and a prayer at the gravestone of Richard Cobbold (1797-1877), son of John Cobbold and Elizabeth Knipe, poet, writer, Suffolk Parson, Rector of Wortham and author of Margaret Catchpole, as we all know. In another corner of the cemetery lies Rev. Hubert George Hiller, Rector of Wortham and father of George, whom we stayed with in Devon and who presided at the wedding of George and Constance in 1959.



Next came a brief stop in Tostock, home of Robert Cobbold (died 1603) and where the family tree has its known beginnings. No gravestones revealed the Cobbold name, with many worn smooth by time, wind and weather. However, if perchance you happen to be in the neighbourhood on the 2nd of November, the church is holding a presentation on the Breweries of Suffolk.



And next came a stop in Rattlesden, home of Reynold Cobbold, who lived to 102 (1564 – 1666). A beautiful village in a valley, 4 miles west of Stowmarket, and a 2 miles from Drinkwater, from whence Lucy Patteson Cobbold. The church is situated on a rise above the village, with typical Norman tower but in this case an additional steeple on top, all making for an imposing and beautiful sight. And guess what? Close to the gate.....a headstone for John Cobbold (died 1896 at age 80) erected by his son.....and nearby, a headstone for Mary Catchpole! Now back for help from Anthony to trace this connection, albeit no doubt there are many Cobbolds already well aware of what we saw as a final Cobbold blessing.



Once again Sheila came through, steering us via Stowmarket, A14, A12, M25, M11 and diagonally NE to SW across London via Tower Bridge to Wimbledon to stay 2 nights with sister Philippa. That evening Philippa hosted a delightful dinner at an Italian restaurant in Wimbledon.

*Monday.....*capucinno at Starbucks on Wimbledon High Street was followed by a District Line and tube trip to meet our first cousin Ann Tingay, (nee Cobbold, daughter of Robert Cobbold of South Africa, out of England before WWII). Ann's husband Paul had returned to Zimbabwe via the Middle East the previous week. Ann was visiting from Zimbabwe with her daughter Clare, assisting with Clare's new daughter Sophia (July 2009) and son Hugh (born 4 April 2007). We also spent some time with Ann's son Gregory at his pottery nearby where Gregory was working diligently preparing for an exhibition of his work. Gregory does marvelous work, with many popular ceramic bowls, vases, mugs all featuring his artistry of the Zimbabwe and African style.



Ann Tingay, daughter, Clare



Jeannie, Gregory, Philippa, Ann

This was followed by supper with some of sister Ann's progeny: daughter Suzy, husband Mark, Ann's granddaughter Lou-Celeste and great grand-daughter Sienna, Ann's daughter Nathalie and husband Irene and her grandson Francis.



Lou-Celeste, Sienna, Suzy, Mark



Nathalie, Irene and Francis

*Tuesday 20 October....*in the morning it was farewell to Philippa and Wimbledon, with once again Sheila steering us over Kew Bridge to Heathrow airport.

We caught the non-stop 7 hour Air Canada flight back to Ottawa, where we were greeted by falling leaves and a dazzling display of tropical blooms (hibiscus, oleander, mandevilla, and passion flowers) recently repaired from our garden into the conservatory added to our house two years ago.....as I mentioned to Philip.... "Glemham conservatory West" a smaller version, all glass sunroom patterned after his magnificent Victorian style conservatory at Glemham Hall.



Closing Hymn

It was a truly wonderful occasion in honouring Felix Cobbold, combined with visits with close family.

Dick and Jeannie thank their cousins, sisters, nephews, nieces, first cousins-once-removed, especially Anthony, and indeed Cobbolds all, as well as Owen Duffy, author Rosalind Thomas, Maureen, and others for a fantastic and very meaningful commune with family.

Wednesday, the next day, it was back to work for Dick, and Jeannie's final preparations for her local Guild Craft Sale on Saturday 24 October.