

BOOTS! Lord Kitchener's Boots

May 2023

No, we are not going to devote a whole Cobbweb to a pair of boots but his footwear and his portrait have been in the news lately in Ipswich. Maybe as a result of the refurbishment of the museum his lordship's boots and their detachable spurs emerged as due for a clean. This task was carried out by that perpetually most loyal Ipswich citizen, **Rowell Bell**, who is an ardent supporter of our trust. He wrote an article about the boots and their owner for the **Friends of Ipswich Museum** spring newsletter. In it he reminded his readers that Kitchener's mother was a Chevallier and that Chevalliers and Cobbolds had married in three separate generations. He also pointed out that the boots had been gifted to the museum by **Viscountess Broome, Adela Mary Evelyn Monins (1893-1986)** #1168, daughter of **Edith (Edie) Julia Cobbold (1863-1947)** #309. They are recorded as the boots worn by **Lord Kitchener (1850-1916)** #733 on his last visit to France before being tragically lost at sea.

John Dupuis Cobbold (1861-1929) #307 donated a fine portrait of Earl Kitchener of Khartoum, mounted and possibly wearing the same boots, to the Borough Council Collection of the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, which was in the Town Hall for all to see. That is, until very recently, when it was taken down, wrapped and put into storage. The unanswered question is why? Were the council ashamed of him? Did they fear damage from protesters? Was it in need of restoration or were they just bored with it? As yet, we have no answer but it does seem an opportunity was missed as the upcoming exhibition in the Wolsey Gallery at Christchurch Mansion is titled 'Animals in the Art Gallery' for which Adrian Jones' portrait would have been perfect.

Anthony Cobbold