



IPSWICH and ARRAS SQUARE

November 2023

Regular readers will know that the Trust is in membership of the **Ipswich Society**, a body which we hold in high esteem. In September this year the Society organised its annual ***Ipswich Heritage Open Days*** and produced a fine colour booklet describing 30 buildings in and around Ipswich which are of historic interest. Nine of the thirty have featured in the story of the Cobbold family in Ipswich including, of course, Christchurch Mansion, St Clement's Church, Fore Street Baths and St Mary le Tower.

Number twenty-nine in the booklet is St Stephen's Church. Although mentioned in the Domesday Book the present building is fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The church stands on **Arras Square** which is due to be redeveloped by **Ipswich Borough Council**. Having published their plans the council received a disturbing letter from the 'Design out Crime' officer of **Suffolk Police**. He claimed that between March 2018 and October 2022 there had been, in Arras Square, 47 public order offences, 42 physical assaults and 6 offences of a sexual nature. His letter went on to explain that the tombs in the churchyard were being used as tables by drinkers and for sexual activities and drug taking. He recommended the introduction of railings to prevent such antisocial behaviour.

The tomb to be thus protected is the tomb of **Savage Cobbold (1769-1839)** #8589 and his brother **Andrew (1770-1801)** #8590. They were nephews of '**Big**' **John Cobbold**, being the sons of 'Big' John's brother **William**. Records show that William was both a corn factor and an ironmonger who had been awarded the Freedom of the City of London. His son Andrew was apprenticed to his father initially for seven years to learn the art of an ironmonger but must have had a change of mind for he had become a Master Mariner by the age of 30. It may not have been a good choice, for he pre-deceased his older brother only a year later.

It is possible that the tomb had been subjected to even more serious interference some time previously because the Trust acquired from an antique dealer the coffin plate from Savage's coffin. It is clear from its condition that it had been affixed (presumably to the coffin) in its earlier life and that it had been subject to the effects of damp before being removed. On the assumption that Savage and Andrew's bodies are still in the tomb, which is by no means certain, we feel that railings might not be a bad idea. Better late than never!