



FELIX - the Original Family Historian

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Felix Thornley Cobbold (1841-1909) #201 on the web family tree is widely appreciated in Ipswich and indeed throughout Suffolk for his philanthropy. His gifts of **Christchurch Mansion** in 1895, the former Ipswich Racecourse and some 852 acres of good agricultural land to the **East Suffolk County Council**, in trust, are but a few examples.

What is not so widely known is that he was the original Cobbold family historian. In Victorian times when pursuit of family history became fashionable it was deemed desirable to establish a link to royalty whether genuine or fictitious. We have exposed one such imaginary entry but this was not at all the route taken by Felix. With an academic background his thorough research was aided by the **Reverend Joseph Russell Olorenshaw** who produced the *Notes on the Church in the Parish of Rattlesden*. On publication in 1900 a copy of this was sent by Felix to **Christian Chevallier Cobbold (1868-1910)** #341 being passed down to his grandson **Richard (Dick) Temple Chevallier (1939)** #622.

In 2009 Dick and his wife **Jeannie née Potter**, ardent and much appreciated supporters of **The Cobbold Family History Trust**, who live in Ottawa donated the book to the Trust on the occasion of Felix's centenary party at Christchurch Mansion. (For an account of their trip, *A Communion of Cobbolds* see Cobbweb, Nov. 2009 – [click here](#)). With the book about Rattlesden was a handwritten letter to Christian from Felix including a pedigree for 9 generations of Cobbolds "...where our ancestors were living throughout the Stuart times and well into Hanovarian...to show you the descent. It is absolutely proved by the Court Rolls of the Manor of Rattlesden; and the wills of the various progenitors." Felix's work, checked and unaltered, forms the basis of the family tree we see and love today.

A little aside on the pedigree says that **Rev. Thomas Cobbold (1742-1831)** #51 sold the Rattlesden property to Cocksedge in 1812. The last paragraph of Felix's letter sounds a mildly triumphal note: "*I purchased last October year about 50 acres of the land which my great grandfather's eldest brother sold away in 1812.*"

The original letter and Felix's copy of the limited (to 200) edition of the book are now preserved in perpetuity in the Trust archive. Thank you, Dick and Jeannie.

Anthony Cobbold