

OBJECT OF THE YEAR

March 2026

A small teddy bear belonging to a member of the Cobbold family has been named as the Object of the Year for 2026 by the Hertfordshire Association of Museums. The award was presented on 4th March, recognising the historical and emotional significance of the bear, known simply as “Teddy”, which is now on display at Knebworth House.

Teddy belonged to **Cameron Cobbold** (1904-1987) #490, the grandfather of Knebworth House’s current custodian and Cobbold Family History Trust trustee, Henry Lytton Cobbold. Cameron’s biography may be viewed on the family tree [here](#). Cameron’s favourite childhood companion was this small bear, which stayed with him through his life and distinguished career as Governor of the Bank of England (1949-1961) and Lord Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth II (1963-1971).

After Cameron’s death in 1987, Teddy, wrapped up in his small dressing gown and scarf, was packed away in the Knebworth House attic. The bear remained hidden for decades until, in 2025, he was discovered by archivists inside a box containing Cameron Cobbold’s most personal possessions. The friendly-looking teddy bear looked so pleased to be out of his box.

Following examination by conservation experts, Teddy was placed on display at Knebworth House. He now sits on his own chair in the Hampden Room, where thousands of visitors have already enjoyed seeing him and hearing the story behind the small bear with a long history.

The Hertfordshire Association of Museums’ Object of the Year award celebrates artefacts that tell compelling stories about the county’s heritage. Teddy’s journey from childhood toy to a witness of an extraordinary life captured the public’s imagination.

Henry Lytton Cobbold said, “Throughout his distinguished public career, my grandfather was happiest in the company of his family and loved ones, of whom Teddy was the longest standing. Teddy remained a beloved companion from childhood cot to death bed. We are so delighted that this very personal object has been recognised by the Hertfordshire Association of Museums.”

Visitors to Knebworth House can see Teddy in the Hampden Room as part of the house tour.

Katherine Dunstan