

## Biography for Capel Lofft

Capel Lofft was born into a middling-class family of civil servants and scholars. Early on a lawyer, when he inherited his uncle Edward Capell's estate in Suffolk, Lofft was able to live independently of any profession. Associated with political and social reform from the 1770s onwards, he was also intellectually voracious, exploring languages and science as well as English literature. In the 1790s his politics became more radical, and he campaigned for universal male suffrage and against the death penalty, amongst other things.

In 1798, Lofft was sent *The Farmer's Boy* by Robert Bloomfield's brother George, and from that point became Bloomfield's patron, making grammatical and orthographical changes to the poem, and adding a preface, in order to smooth some of the cobbler-poet's linguistic roughness. His relationship with Bloomfield was sometimes tempestuous, but survived for more than twenty years.

A supporter of Napoleon, Lofft continued to circulate with prominent literary figures, including Coleridge and Hazlitt, despite the unpopularity of their political views. Lofft died in May 1824 in Piedmont, Italy.