



The largest round church tower in England

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The parish church of St. Mary in Wortham, near the border between Suffolk and Norfolk, could be easily missed by the casual visitor because of the broadly spread nature of this historic little village. The church is significant to the Cobbold family for a few reasons, the most widely known of which is that **Richard Cobbold (1797-1877) #106** was rector for 52 years. He followed **Henry Patteson (1757-1824) #1088** who had held the parish for 42 years. The good people of Wortham were unaccustomed to change in their spiritual direction.

Some 300 years earlier the largest round church tower in England, a full 10 metres across, had been built for St. Mary's but sadly the roof fell in the 1780s though the original floor positions are still evident. Also, there for the visitor to enjoy is a truly remarkable collection of pew-end carvings. These, along with 19th century repairs to the fabric appear to be the work of **Albert Bartram** of Wortham who was both a churchwarden and a builder. There are 18 carvings, inspired by Psalm 104, the first book of Samuel and the Gospel according to St. Matthew. We show two of the carvings here and all will be displayed shortly elsewhere on this site. One carving was stolen in 2008, a replacement being skilfully provided by Wortham resident, **Graham Trudgill** in 2011.

Photographs of the carvings and their inscribed inspirations were kindly given by **David Miller** who with his wife, **Sarah** are good friends of the Trust. Attentive family members will remember David as Chair of the Friends of Christchurch Park and a one-time moving light (and principal waterer!) of Ipswich Arboretum. He kindly keeps an eye on the Cut-Leaf Beech we planted to mark the tercentenary of the brewery.

Although Richard Cobbold sold the living of Wortham to King's College, Cambridge to provide for his children, that was not the end of the Cobbold connection. In 1935 **Hubert George Hiller #3003**, a King's choral scholar was appointed to the living, and officiated there in 1958 at the marriage of his son, **George Edward Dacre Hiller (1922-2017) #609** to **Constance Chevallier Cobbold (1930-2016) #608**.

Anthony Cobbold