ANOTHER RICHARD COBBOLD PAINTING

Sept 2012

Though we say it ourselves, the Trust has been quite successful in collecting original Richard Cobbold paintings and another came our way recently. It is titled *Meet of Sir Edward Clarence Kerrison’s Foxhounds, Foxhunters Gate, Wortham Ling, February 19th 1872*. A label and signature on the back tell us that it was mounted and framed by Josiah Goldworth Coe, a Carver and Guilder of Mere Street, Diss, a few days later.

Richard’s notes on the back, written on 3rd March, tell us that the picture depicts Sir Edward C Kerrison in the midst of his hounds walking to his hunter held by his groom. In the foreground is Major Betts on his Chestnut horse – and a tenant farmer, a great hunter, is on the right hand.

But behind the enjoyment of a day’s sport there hangs a sadder tale.

The Betts of Wortham Hall will have been well known to Richard but that line of their family was soon to die out, despite having lived in Wortham since 1480. Keen huntsman, Major George, the only son of Rev Thomas D’Eye Betts (1789-1859), who served with the 81st Regiment throughout the Indian Mutiny was to die unmarried in 1883; his older sister had died in 1862 and her heir was to die in 1873 leaving only a younger sister who also died without issue, in 1905.

Sir Edward Clarence Kerrison inherited his father’s baronetcy which had been bestowed in 1821 for Political Services, and was himself also elected to Parliament, firstly for Eye (1852-1866) and secondly for East Suffolk (1866-1867). He married Lady Caroline Margaret Fox-Strangeways, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Ilchester in July 1844 but they had no children so the baronetcy became extinct on his death in 1886.

Richard was prolific, both with pen and brush, and seems to have had an eye to the day when his legacy would be appraised and this picture is no exception. His inscription on the back is a curious combination of sadness and self-satisfaction but we must remember that it was painted only five years before he died when his eyesight was already beginning to fail. Here is what he said:

This sketch was made by The Revd. Richard Cobbold MA. Is he not a Master of Arts? Rector of Wortham. Twenty seven years Rural Dean of Hartismere. No Lord – Bishop – Prelate – Bart or MP ever gave him or any of his children anything. He never wanted anything? His Heavenly Father gave him Grace His earthly Father gave him the living of Wortham. He gave himself to do his duty but very deficiently. He lived 50 years with one dear wife whom he married in 1822 and this is now 1872.

Richard Cobbold (1797-1877) is #106 on the family tree.