



About St Michael's

In 1086, Domesday Book recorded a church with sixty acres of meadow at Cotham, in the lordship of Walter D'Aincourt. His son Ralph granted the church to his newly-founded Thurgarton Priory. St Michael's Church remained in the possession of the priory until the Dissolution of the priory in the 16th century.

During the Wars of the Roses, the manor was in the possession of Robert Markham, who had married the daughter of the previous lord, Sir Giles Daubney. Markham was a staunch Yorkist and fought alongside Edward IV. His descendant, another Robert Markham, was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, who described him as 'Markham the Lion'. The grandest monument in the church, now removed, was that of Ann Markham who died on 17th November, 1601.

The present building is a fragment of what was originally a much larger church. The church may have had a tower as well as north and south aisles, but any such features were destroyed during the demolition of the west end in the 1790s. The porch was added in 1830 and the entire building was restored in 1890.

St Michael's was placed in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust in 1989.

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The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk.

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Access

Due to their age, historic church floors can be uneven and worn and lighting can be low level. Please take care, especially in wet weather when floors can be slippery.

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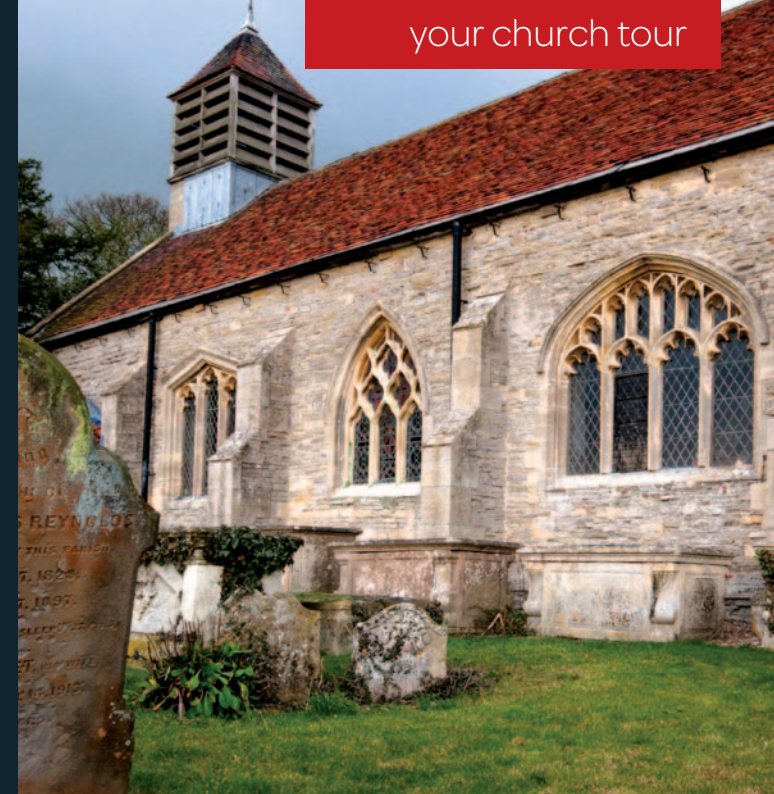
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your church tour



Church of
St Michael

Cotham



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The historic church of St Michael

10 things to see before you leave...

- 1 The **font** is a plain octagonal design and is of unknown date. The cover is thought to date to the late 19th century. The base may be a reused column from the now demolished sections of the church.
- 2 A surviving feature of the larger church is the group of medieval **corbels** on the west wall, depicting a lion, a bearded man and a green man. Originally these would have been used to support wooden beams but are now purely decorative.
- 3 Near the altar is an elaborate 14th-century **piscina**, which would have been used by the priest to wash his hands and the sacred vessels after Mass. The basin is decorated with a petal design.
- 4 The two **14th-century tombs** along the south wall (one slightly obscured by the pulpit) are believed to belong to members of the Leeke family, who were in possession of the manor at this time. On the front of the tomb closer to the door there are shields which probably depicted the family heraldry.
- 5 Along the south and north wall, the wooden panelling of the **Georgian box pews** has survived. If you look closely, you can see where the hinges and benches were once attached.
- 6 The **wooden roof** is divided into six bays, comprising wall posts, collars, king posts and struts. Some timbers are medieval.
- 7 Most of the **stained glass** dates to the mid-19th century. The windows along the south wall were made by William Wailes and depict three parables, as well as various geometric designs. The east window depicts the Crucifixion.
- 8 **Romesse stoves** such as this one were manufactured by the Columbian Iron Foundry, established in 1890 at Bonnybridge, Scotland. They had a global reputation and the brand was favoured by Florence Nightingale for use in her Balaclava hospital.
- 9 On the external south wall of the church is a **sundial**, dating to 1643. This appears to be in its original position and still displays the correct time.
- 10 Some remarkable historic **graffiti** survives, incised into in the jamb of the south door. The larger of the etchings appears to depict a church structure but could also be interpreted as a windmill or the stable and star of the Nativity story.

