

# The COBBOLD Family History Trust

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## THE GOLDSMITHS AND THE COMPOSER

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The Trust reported in June that it had purchased the catalogue (2004) for an Exhibition of East Anglian Silver 1550-1750. This book revealed that William Cobbold was one of the leading Goldsmiths in Norwich. The bibliography encouraged us to purchase another book Norwich Silver and its Marks 1565-1702 and The Goldsmiths of Norwich 1141-1750 by G N Barrett (1981) By combining information from these two books with basic research carried out by Arthur J Cobbold of Letchworth it is possible to provide the following little family cameo.

William Cobbold (c1530-1586) (son of William and his wife Emma) completed his 7 year apprenticeship to Thomas Bere in 1552. He became undoubtedly the most talented of the Norwich Goldsmiths. His surviving masterpiece is the Reade Salt in the Norwich Civic Regalia. William's high standing in the Company of Norwich Goldsmiths is evidenced in the fact that he was joint Warden in their first recorded official year of 1564 and again in 1566 and 1567.

His lovely and unusual Communion Cup is the pride of St. Andrews, the parish church of the Goldsmiths. He lived near Swan Lane in Cutlers Row which is now London St. and died in 1586. No less than 116 pieces of his work survive to this day in Norfolk and Suffolk churches.

William had six children and we know something of two of them. His eldest son, also William (1560-1639) was a musician, composer, madrigalist and Organist at Norwich Cathedral from 1594 until 1608. One of his pieces was included in the famous collection of English madrigals The Triumphs of Oriana composed in honour of Queen Elizabeth I. Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1814) the great music historian referring to that work in 1728 declared the most agreeable madrigal in this collection seems to be the twelfth, composed by William Cobbold He was a man of some substance with property in Ber St. Norwich and in St. Andrews.

In his will he was generous to the poor and to a number of parishes. He is buried in the War Memorial Chapel of Beccles Parish Church.

Goldsmith Williams second son Matthew (1564-1604) completed his goldsmiths apprenticeship under George Fenne in 1564. We know that he worked in his fathers shop for a while but



THE READE SALT 1568/69

*The Reade Salt (1568/69) Described by Charles Oman as the most important piece of Elizabethan plate made by a provincial goldsmith and the pride of the Norwich Civic Regalia. The silver gilt salt and cover is 15 ¼ inches high and weighs 59 ounces. It was made by William Cobbold.*

unfortunately his mark is unknown so we have no evidence of his work. He was however held in sufficient regard to be one of the goldsmiths invited to value Simon Borrowes stock in trade when he died in 1602. Matthew died two years later and was laid to rest in the Church of St. Andrew.

A third Cobbold goldsmith is mentioned, Richard who was apprenticed to Timothy Skottowe and is thought to have been Williams grandson but once again there is no record of his mark.

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