



Wollterton Communion Cup

Peter Peterson I

Not on display

Title/Description: Wollterton Communion Cup

Artist/Maker: Peter Peterson I (Goldsmith)

Born: 1568

Object Type: Cup

Materials: Silver

Measurements: h 13.5 x w 8.5 x d 8.5 cm

Inscription: The engraving runs right around the central part of the cups shape, the text is one centimetre in height, there is minor decortion above and below the text running alongside

Accession Number: 41447

Historic Period: 16th century

Production Place: Norwich

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1986

The Wollterton Communion Cup is thought to have been given to Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury as a wedding present in 1986 from John Hewitt. [1] In a letter between Robert Sainsbury and John Hewitt, dated '15th July 1986', Hewitt states: *I have a very fine piece of Norwich silver, a communion cup of the Elizabethan period (1566) - perhaps I shouldn't mention it - but if you want to see it I will bring it up.* [2] John Hewitt identified the cup as being Elizabethan but the date he gives is a typo as there is an engraved inscription upon the chalice reads 1568.

In 1558 Queen Elizabeth I ascended the throne and there was an almost complete changeover to the Reformed religion. In 1559 the Queen restored the use of the cup to the laity, and from 1561 the various bishops gradually enforced the order calling for the destruction of the 'mass chalice', and the substitution of a plain cup and cover'. [3] Previously referred to as the Wollterton Chalice, it should more correctly be called a communion cup. Wollterton is a village north of Norwich and the maker was the Norwich-based goldsmith Peter Peterson I.

The wholesale production of a church plate in Norwich during the years 1565-71 was characterized by the more or less uniform shape of the Communion cup, with a bell-shaped bowl on a spool-shaped stem and a low-domed foot. [4] Comparable to the Wollterton Communion Cup are similar cups of St

Mary's Church, East Carlton, Norfolk and St Margaret's Church, Norwich, Norfolk, all made by Peterson I.

Calvin Winner, August 2021

[1] This information had been passed on from Dr Steven Hooper.

[2] Robert Sainsbury Archive.

[3] Chapter II 'Medieval Goldsmiths' in Geoffrey N. Barrett, 'Norwich Silver and its Marks 1565-1702. The Goldsmiths of Norwich 1141-1750' (Norwich: The Wensum Press, 1981), p.13.

[4] Chapter XIII 'Norwich Silver Important Pieces Illustrated', in Geoffrey N. Barrett, 'Norwich Silver and its Marks 1565-1702. The Goldsmiths of Norwich 1141-1750' (Norwich: The Wensum Press, 1981), p.56.
