

## RKC (by Constable) IS COMING HOME!

February 2018

A fine drawing, almost certainly of **Robert Knipe Cobbold (1792-1859)** #100 on the web family tree, by **John Constable (1776-1837)** executed in 1806 when he was visiting **Elizabeth Cobbold (1765-1824)** #58 at the Cliff Brewery in Ipswich, has been purchased by a family member at auction in New York and is on its way back home. For many years the drawing was at Holywells.

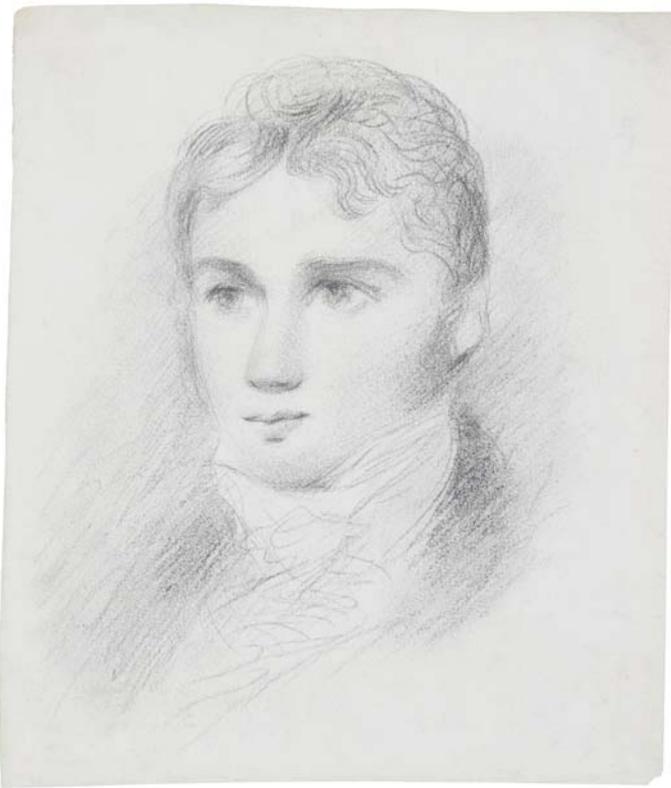
The Trust knows of 9 drawings/sketches of family members by Constable but the one of Robert Knipe Cobbold is by far the most important. He is the first born and eldest son of Elizabeth, 2<sup>nd</sup> wife of **John Cobbold (1746-1835)** #56. The others are of **Harriet (1785-1877)** #91 and her sister **Sophia (1787-1833)** #96 both Elizabeth's step daughters. Four of the drawings are in the Musée du Louvre and two in the British Museum and two in a private collection.

Our knowledge of Robert's life is somewhat fragmentary. He was born in Woodbridge the year after his parents' marriage and he learned his trade at his father's brewery in Colchester before becoming a brewer himself in Eye where all his nine children were born. Their mother was **Emily Mary Smith (1791-1860)** #101, 5th daughter of **John Paul Smith (1747-1804)** #779, a London Tea Merchant, this being the time, of course, when tea was very expensive. By 1841 the family was living at Carlton Rookery, Saxmundham and by about 1851 they were at Bredfield White House where he is remembered as an active, alert, upright figure, often in a frilled shirt and a black stock.

At about this time he acquired an estate at Sutton on the banks of the River Deben close to Sutton Hoo. This is probably to do with his known involvement with the mining of Coprolite but he is also known to have speculated in Clover seed, Chicory and Flax. The Trust has his snuff box, pictured, with its rather engaging inscription presented to him the month of his 64<sup>th</sup> birthday. The local paper records that he also took delivery of a barge load of surplus stores from Crimea so perhaps it was the unloading of the barge which prompted the gift.

We also have detail of the crest used on his bookplate; the left half being Cobbold (Holly leaves) quartered with Knipe and the righthand half being his wife's Smith crest. The bookplate has another interesting feature; the motto 'REPUNGO'. Strictly this means 'I prick back' or less literally 'my prickles are my defence' – clearly a reference to the Holly leaves. Later versions of the arms have the letters 'n' and 'g' reversed to read 'REPUGNO' which is translated as 'I fight back'. We are left not knowing whether the change was deliberate or accidental.

Robert died at Bredfield in 1859 having caught a chill. He and his wife are commemorated by stained glass windows at Sutton (a handsome east window by Warrington) and at Bredfield Church where they are both buried..



The Constable Drawing



Carlton Rookery



Bredfield White House (Demolished 1950)



The Snuff Box



Bookplate.