

SECOND, THIRD & FOURTH EARLS OF STRADBROKE

Their Contributions to the Founding and First 100 Years of Framlingham College

The Rt Hon Sir John Edward Cornwallis Rous, second Earl of Stradbroke, Viscount Dunwich and Baron Rous, a Baronet, became President of the College Corporation in 1864 and held office until his death. He succeeded to this Earldom on the death of his father in 1827 who was created Baron in 1796 and became the first Earl in 1821. The second Earl was the head in his day of a family descended from Sir Peter Rous who settled at Dennington at the time of King Edward the Third. The Earl was born at Darsham Hall in 1794 and educated at Westminster School and remarked at a Framlingham Speech Day later: "The only prizes I received were treacle and brimstone with a little caning." He joined up in the Coldstream Guards and served until 1817 and saw service with the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War (1807-14); a severe accident on the eve of the battle kept him from Waterloo in 1815. From 1830 to 1844 he was Colonel of the East Suffolk Militia and was Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Suffolk and Vice Admiral of the Suffolk Coast 1842-46.



The Deputation of 22 February 1862 (*ibid* Kerrison) waited on the Earl for the purpose of raising a memorial to Prince Albert in shape of a college. He was a guest at Shrubland Park when Prince Albert stayed there in 1851 (*ibid* Kerrison).

Lord Stradbroke presided at the meeting in Ipswich Town Hall on 18 March 1862 and one of the resolutions requested the Earl to accept the position of Patron of the College.

At the Great White Horse Hotel in Ipswich on 7 May 1864, a meeting was held to petition the Crown to Grant a Charter and Lord Stradbroke was in the chair. The noble lord was said to "worthily take the lead in all matters that concern the interests of the county and has surpassed himself in his effort of this undertaking..... together with the energetic exertions of Sir Edward Kerrison." The Earl gave £500 as an initial subscriber.

Lord Stradbroke took the chair at Speech Day in 1868 and P68 John Booth in "The First Sixty Years" says "The large Dining Hall of the College was decorated with flags etc and as gaily adorned with a very large and fashionable gathering of the elite of the county. The prizes were bound in calf, marbled and gilt with the College monogram and motto stamped in gold on the side. Refreshments of teas, coffees, buns etc were provided.At 5 o'clock a concert of songs, glees etc was given by the College Choir." The second Earl also chaired Speech Days in 1870, 1872, 1875.

Lord & Lady Stradbroke topped the donor list with £50 to a fund for enlarging the chapel which cost £1,200 in 1876.

The Earl died on 27 January 1886 in his 92nd year. The Countess was 36 years his junior and one of the Founders of the school and occasional visitor until the end of her life. For many years she presented prizes for music.

"A Boys window" as opposed to a religious one was put in the Chapel as a memorial to the second Earl at a cost of £200 in 1896.

Col The Rt Hon The third Earl of Stradbroke GCMG CB CVO CBE MA of Trinity College, Cambridge, JP, DL of Henham Hall, Governor of Victoria, Vice-Admiral of the Suffolk Coast, ADC to His Majesty the King was appointed to the Corporation 1886 and became President in 1907. He retired as President in 1912 and became a Governor in 1925. The Earl chaired Speech Days in 1888, 1893 and 1901.



After Queen Victoria died in 1901, a Suffolk memorial was proposed to honour the dead Queen. The third Earl of Stradbroke and seven others jointly signed a Notice in the press to found a Queen Victoria Scholarship at the Albert Memorial College. Only £1,915 was raised against the expected £5,000 so a second revised plan proposed by G H Garrett was accepted to produce £20 a year.

Lord Stradbroke hosted the Prince Arthur of Connaught at Henham Hall in 1904 and brought a cricket team to the school as was his custom for many years. The Prince was the first Royal Visitor to the school. In 1903, G J Willans scored 119 against the Earl's XI.

A War Memorial Fund was formed in 1918 under the presidency of the third Earl and approximately £4,000 was subscribed.

The Earl was one of the well known soldiers around the 1920s and about that time he carried out an Inspection of the College Cadet Corps.

Lord Stradbroke with the Headmaster and two of the Governors supported the continuation of the Scout Troop when the OTC was formed in 1926.

The third Earl completed 60 years of service as a member of the Corporation in 1946 when he retired.

The Earl died on 20 December 1947 a year after retiring. Dr Rendall, Chairman of the Governors, recalled: "He had served two Kings, Edward VII and George V as Aide-de-Camp and the enlightened guidance he had given as Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, as a Governor, as a soldier and as friend to many official bodies and countless acquaintances." The following is the full speech from the Framlinghamian, Spring 1948 :-

The Late Earl of Stradbroke

An Address to the Corporation of Framlingham College, delivered by Dr. M. J. Rendall, at a Meeting on February 27th, 1948.

I have been asked to express in a few words our deep and, in very truth, affectionate regard for the Third Earl of Stradbroke, who was for many years the President of this Corporation. The name which he bore is an inalienable part of Framlingham. His Father, the Second Earl of Stradbroke, was our first President and one of the Founders of the College. The name Stradbroke is carved upon one of our four Houses, and is graven upon the hearts of countless men who knew by experience the lifelong service of their friend the Third Earl in Peace and in War.

The two Kings whose Aide-de-Camp he was, Edward the VIIth and George the Vth, the Territorial Association which he fostered sixty years ago, the Brigade of Royal Field Artillery which he commanded in the First World War in France, in Egypt and in Palestine, the Australians whom he governed in Victoria, the Ministry of Agriculture, whose Secretary he was in Parliament, the East Suffolk County Council, who made him their Chairman, and endless local Services, who acclaimed their Lord Lieutenant, will never forget their trustworthy friend.

It was our privilege to be his comrades: he was seldom absent from a meeting of the Governors.

When this quiet and courteous man moved among us with unaffected modesty, we were tempted to forget, for the moment, his immense record of service for King and Country. Here he was at home: he was one of us: we knew the place that Framlingham held in his affection.

When a Memorial Window was erected in our Chapel to his Father, the Second Earl, he was described as "a brave soldier, a fine country gentleman and a good churchman and Christian." Every word is equally true of his son: and, when we were allowed to secure a copy of our friend's portrait for Framlingham College, we hesitated between two pictures which were available at Henham Hall: one represented the "country gentleman": the other the "brave soldier" and man of affairs: we should have liked both, but chose the latter: the Earl is standing in full uniform, with military and civil distinctions.

In a few weeks a copy of this portrait will be hanging in the Boys' Dining Hall, to perpetuate, if God wills, his name and work for generations to come.

England is crying for such men! It is our honour to have known him.

Of two pictures at Henham Hall, the College chose to have the 'brave soldier' one and a copy was soon hung in the Dining Hall.

The fourth Earl presented a Georgian silver salver to Reginald Kirkman upon his retirement as Headmaster in 1955 as "a token of the appreciation from the Governors for his 15 years service of unremitting efforts and the success of those years and surviving the war years."

In 1952, Lord Stradbroke made a permanent loan of a full-length portrait of his grandfather, the Second Earl, and it hung in pride of place in the Dining Hall – only to be repossessed 32 years later by the sixth Earl.



When Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, came as Royal Visitor to the College for its Centenary on 26 June 1964, she was accompanied by Lord Stradbroke as Lord Lieutenant of the County and President of the Corporation.

At Speech Day in 1971, the Earl advised the audience of the possibility of the College becoming independent and was disappointed the school would be losing its Direct Grant status.

At the 1974 Speech Day Lord Stradbroke confirmed his pledge of 1971 and announced the school would become independent on 1 April 1975 and advised his disappointment that Suffolk County Council were no longer sending boys to the College.

In June 1978, Lord Stradbroke opened the Jubilee Wing at Brandeston with rooms for music, drama and craft, two class-rooms, two dormitories and a Girls Common Room - in the middle of the ceremony his lordship was heckled by a strident peacock.