

## THE HON WILLIAM ROBERTSON WARREN KC (1892-99)

He was a lawyer and politician, born in St. John's, Newfoundland, on October 9, 1879. He was educated at Bishop Field College, St. John's, and Framlingham College. He studied law and matriculated from London University in 1897.

He was admitted a Solicitor in Newfoundland in 1901, was called to the Bar in the following year and created K.C. in 1910. His earlier career in the profession of the Law was in partnership with Mr. E. P. Morris, afterwards Lord Morris, and with Sir Richard Squires; both of whom became Prime Ministers of Newfoundland. His own entry into the public life of the Colony was made in 1902, when he was elected to the House of Assembly as MP for Trinity Bay.

He came of a family rich in the traditions of the Colony. His great-grandfather, Robert Park, represented Conception Bay in the first Colonial Legislature of 1832, while his grandfather, the Honourable John Warren, representing Trinity Bay, was a member of the first Parliament elected under the system of responsible Government granted in 1855. Mr. Warren himself soon won recognition for his debating capacity, knowledge of public affairs and love of sport. He excelled at cricket and football in his younger days, while golf, of which he was champion of the Colony for four years, salmon fishing, motoring, and curling, were the recreations of his later years.

In 1908 he was returned as MP for Port de Grave and from 1909 to 1913 was Speaker of the House of Assembly. In the summer of 1911, he represented "the oldest colony" in the British Empire at the Coronation of George V and he was, in addition, the youngest Parliamentary delegate present. It was claimed that he was the youngest Speaker who had ever held office in the history of British Parliaments. To him fell the honour of responding for the Overseas Dominions when Lord Rosebery proposed the toast at the great gathering at Westminster Hall following the coronation.

In the election of 1913, he was defeated, but his interest in public affairs continued undiminished, and he was one of the founders of the Empire Parliamentary Association. In 1919 he was returned as MP for Fortune Bay, with a place in the executive Council as Minister of Justice and Attorney General. At this period he was retained by "the Government to act for Newfoundland in the historic Labrador boundary dispute with Canada. His constituency of Fortune Bay re-elected him in 1923, and when the Squires Ministry broke up, he was called upon to form a Ministry.

He attended the Imperial Conference in London in 1923, where his character, personality and ability made him many friends; and in the same year he was admitted to the Honorary Degree of LL.D. at Edinburgh University.

His Ministry fell in 1924, and although he formed another Government, this only lasted four days. In 1926 he was appointed a Judge of the Newfoundland Supreme Court.

He died on 31 December 1927 when only 48. He was twice married, and left one son and three daughters. His first wife was a sister of Sir Victor Gordon, who was High Commissioner for Newfoundland in London.

In 1910 he gave a set of book-markers to the College Library. He was elected a Vice President of the SOF and presented the prizes on Speech Day 1921. The December 1921 magazine includes the following speech by him at the OF Annual Dinner that year :-

*The Hon. W. R. Warren, in proposing the toast of the School, related that when he was a boy of twelve his mother brought him to England with a view to sending him to some public school. Several prospectuses were obtained ; that from Framlingham contained a photograph of Dr. Inskip, the then head master, and he remembered his mother saying that a man with a face like that could not do any harm to her little boy, and so he was despatched to Framlingham. Mr. Warren went on to suggest that Mr. Stacks should have his photograph in the School prospectus, and then there would be a waiting-list of a thousand. (Laughter and applause). He*



*thought the reason why Framlingham continued to prosper was, first of all, because of the character of the masters, and, secondly, because of the boys themselves ; between them they had made the traditions of the School. Looking back, he realised what a lot that school had done for him. The record of the School in the war was fine, and it was very refreshing to find, all round the Empire, old Framlingham boys had done something. Mr. Stocks was keeping up the reputation of the School, and it was a pleasure to see the great interest the Society of Old Framlinghamians had in the School ; that was the best tribute they could pay to it. (Hear, hear).*

On 14 June 1919, John Alcock and Arthur Brown commenced the first ever non-stop trans-Atlantic flight. They flew a modified World War I Vickers Vimy from St John's Newfoundland to Clifden in County Galway, Ireland. Aboard the flight was a packet of 197 letters that Dr. Robinson, Postmaster in Newfoundland, had entrusted to the fliers. They bore no airmail stamps which had not yet been invented. The packet of letters included one written by William Robertson Warren K.C, dated 10 June 1919. He wrote to F.W.Stocks, Headmaster of the College at that time, sending his best wishes in the hope that the letter would be carried on the first successful trans-Atlantic air flight. In the letter, Warren expresses the view that the envelope and stamp "ought to form a valuable addition to the School Museum". The letter was successfully delivered, as this extract from July 1919 School Magazine shows :-

The Headmaster has received the following letter which was brought over by Capt. Sir John Alcock and Lieut. Sir A. W. Brown in the first direct Trans-Atlantic flight, which was successfully achieved by them on June 11th. The envelope is marked " Aerial Post " and the stamp has " Trans-Atlantic Air Post, 1919 " on

it. We offer our warmest thanks to W. R. Warren, K. C., for his kindly thought which has bestowed on the School a memento which will be of increasing value as the years pass by.

ST. JOHN'S,  
NEWFOUNDLAND,  
June 10th, 1919.

F. W. Stocks, Esq.,  
Headmaster,  
Framlingham College,  
Suffolk, England.

Dear Sir,

I am an O.F., and I am sending you this letter by what I hope will be the first successful trans-Atlantic air flight. The number of letters allowed is very limited, and the envelope and stamp ought to form a valuable addition to the School Museum.

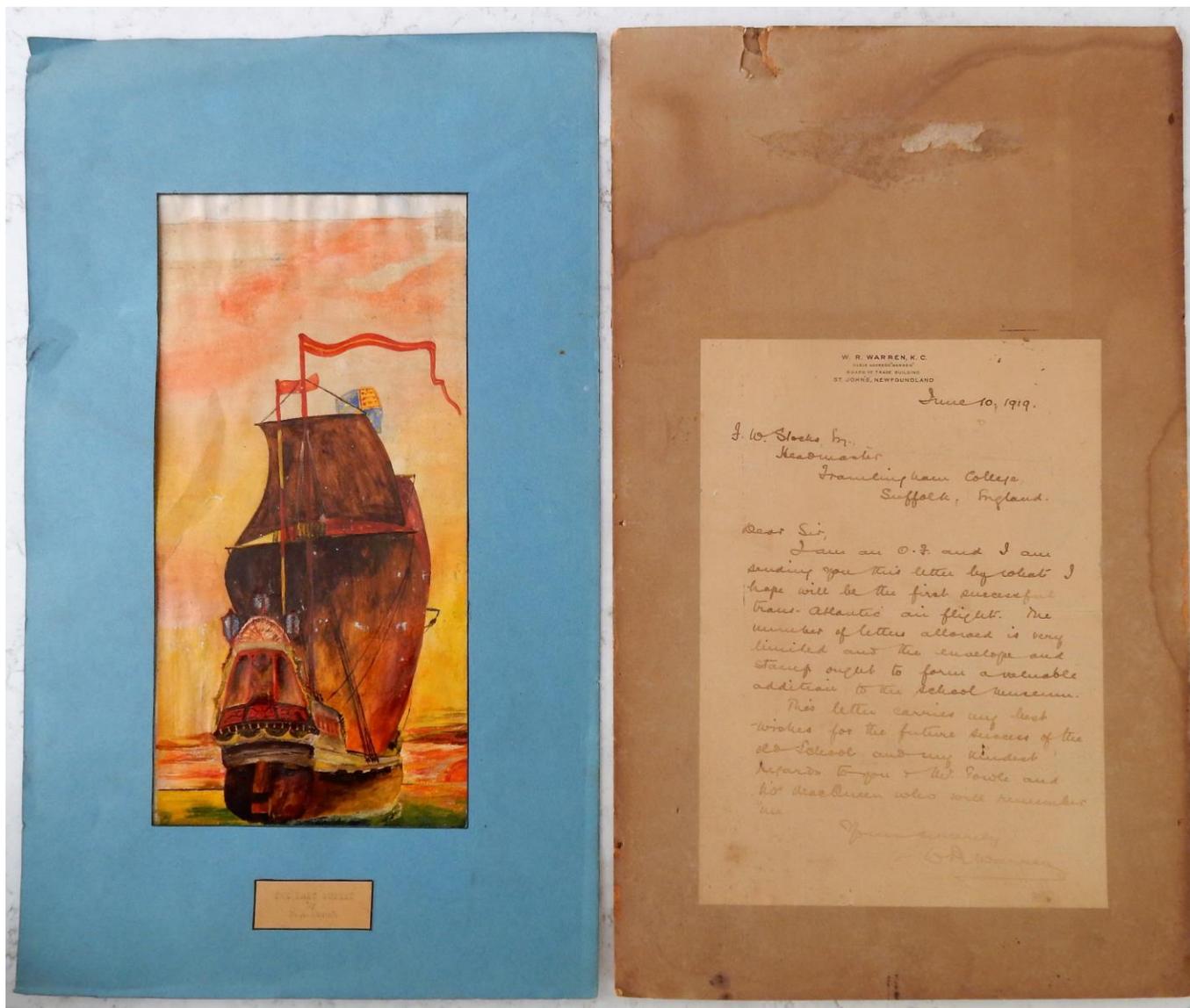
This letter carries my best wishes for the future success of the old school, and my kindest regards to you and Mr. Towie and Mr. MacQueen, who will remember me.

Yours sincerely,  
W. R. WARREN.

 The Society of  
Old Framlinghamians

[www.oldframlinghamian.com](http://www.oldframlinghamian.com)

Fast forward 40 years, and the letter was languishing in the College Museum of which **Neville Marsh (S53-61)** was a Curator. Neville had decided to enter the Arts Cup in 1961 with a painting which needed a frame. Warren's framed letter was the perfect size, so Neville put his picture into the frame with the letter on card behind. Stradbroke won the Arts Cup that year and Neville took out the Howard Smith Prize for Art. Thirty years later, the framed art work with the letter hidden, made its way to Queensland when Neville emigrated and 50 years after its creation came to light during a cull of personal memorabilia. The painting (pictured below) was entitled *The Last Sunset* and Neville thinks it might be a metaphor for him sailing off into the sunset and the outside world!



The letter has now been rightfully returned to the current Headmaster, Paul Taylor, for inclusion in the College Archives having completed its second circumnavigation of the globe. Alas, the envelope and stamp have not survived.

Neville also found a letter in the frame from A R (Bert) Manthorp, his art teacher, thanking him for his help in setting up the 1961 Speech Day art exhibition. Bert writes "I think it all turned out very well but what will happen when you, Eastaugh and Leech leave us - I don't know". Alan Eastaugh (S54-60) and Pat Leech (K54-61) were both stalwarts of the Fram art community.

Here is a virtually full size version of the letter

W. R. WARREN, K. C.  
CABLE ADDRESS: "WARREN"  
BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING  
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

June 10, 1919.

J. W. Stocks, Esq.,  
Headmaster  
Framlingham College,  
Suffolk, England.

Dear Sir,

I am an O.F. and I am sending you this letter by what I hope will be the first successful trans-Atlantic air flight. The number of letters allowed is very limited and the envelope and stamp ought to form a valuable addition to the School Museum.

This letter carries my best wishes for the future success of the old School and my kindest regards to you & Mr. Powle and Mr. MacQueen who will remember me.

Yours sincerely,

W. R. Warren

The following photo appeared in the 1991 magazine, but its extremely hard to identify which man is William Warren.



*ANOTHER PICTURE FROM THE SOF'S ARCHIVES. This group, taken at the OF Day in 1910 includes some notable old boys, among them E. G. Mawby and E. E. Moreau whose generosity to the school is still remembered. Among those at the back are Dawson Waugh the racehorse trainer and the Hon. W. R. Warren, KC, LLD, who was Prime Minister of Newfoundland.*