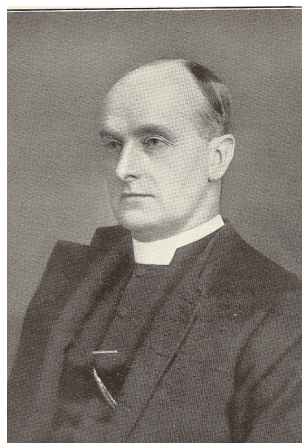


REV OLIVER DIGBY INSKIP (HON OF)

He was born on the 28 December 1852 at Hertford, where his father Harry, was Mayor in 1853. Harry was an amateur actor and playing the part of Oliver in 'As you like it' at the time of his birth!! He was educated at Hertford Grammar School and then Trinity College, Dublin.

He first went to the College working mainly with the Junior School, in 1874, coaching boys academically and in the sporting sphere, playing cricket for Suffolk, and in football was 'mainly in the forward line'. He took his BA back at Trinity in 1881 and left the College in 1883 to become Head at Spalding Grammar School chosen out of 54 candidates. Less than thirty pupils on his arrival rose to over seventy when he left to return to the College, three years later. He thus had served at the College under Rev. Bird and A.H. Scott-White. In 1886 he took Holy Orders at Lincoln Cathedral. Scott-White was later ordained after the College, so when Rev Inskip returned in 1887, the Church connection was restored.



His return had to be seen in connection with the disastrous drop in numbers at the College, during the stewardship of Scott-White. This came about by a severe recession in the field of agriculture, which for a rural community was appalling, followed by bad press when a Master reputedly thrashed a donkey - and failed to appear in court at the appointed time. Local headlines something along the lines of 'pity the boys of Framlingham College, if donkeys get treated thus'. Then in 1886, the first President of the school died. Lord Stradbroke had been in Office since the School's inception. He was succeeded by Sir Edward Clarence Kerrison, second and last Baronet, of Brome Hall. He however died later the same year. Thus the fifth Baron Rendlesham (in the peerage of Ireland), like Kerrison, an old Etonian, became the third President. In the Michaelmas term of 1886 the numbers were 65 on the roll - less than half of the previous year, which had been the worst for a while.

Thus the stage is set for the return of the Rev. Oliver Digby Inskip.M.A. in the January of 1887.

When things have reached rock bottom, there is only one way to go, and Rendlesham later took the credit for selecting O.D. from the 135 candidates for the post, not just for what he did at Spalding, but on the recommendation of Scott-White's predecessor, Bird, for his work at the College in earlier years.

During his time at Spalding, he married Miss. Ellen Mary Debenham, from a well known Suffolk family. Five offspring were to follow, the two boys went to the College and the first two girls married masters there and the youngest married a Harley Street physician.

Inskip made many changes, though he left Schedule I untouched he beefed up Schedule II and made Eng. Lit and Lang., Latin, French, Maths and Drill all compulsory. Mortar-boards were discontinued and caps restored. Prefects and sub-prefects were appointed in lieu of monitors. The spirit within the school was immediately raised and though discipline was still in place boys were put on their honour and trusted implicitly.

At his first speech day, in 1887, The Marquis of Bristol said that the school's crisis was not of its own making but the tide was turning and under the auspices of O.D. we were on an upward and onward course.

In 1891 Sir Cuthbert Quilter presided at Speech Day. He remarked that 'you may applaud what the Governors have done to make Suffolk people proud of this College, but their efforts have been futile compared to those of the man who sits beside me, your Headmaster, Mr. Inskip. I believe it to be one of the best day's work ever done for the cause of education in Suffolk when we put Mr. Inskip at the head of Framlingham College.' Very early in his Headmastership Doctor (of Laws in 1898) won the esteem of the boys and the passage of time only deepened it.

He was the instigator of the publication of the school magazine "The Framlinghamian", the first edition appearing in April 1899.

In 1912 the Old Framlinghamians celebrated 25 years of his headship by presenting him with a cheque and an address engrossed on vellum which contained the following tribute.

'We are not able, and we shall not attempt, to express all that your Headmastership has meant to Framlingham and Framlinghamians. It is enough to say that as soon as this commemoration was suggested, subscriptions flowed so spontaneously from old boys in every quarter of the world, and the messages of affectionate regard which accompanied those subscriptions were eloquent proof of how warm a place you occupy in the hearts and minds of your former pupils. Certain it is that there is no one amongst them but recalls with gratitude some lesson learnt from you in classroom, playing field, or chapel, and we rejoice that Framlingham still flourishes under your wise and kindly rule.'

Many gifts and presentations were made to him and Mrs. Inskip over the years from former pupils and masters, and when 1915 and the fiftieth anniversary appeared on the distant horizon, much was planned with Dr. Inskip as the central figure. It was not to be as in 1913 he tendered his resignation to the Board, with effect from the end of the summer term. It became known that he had accepted the living at Redenhall with Harleston and Wortwell in the diocese of Norwich. The living is one of the most important in the diocese, and the presentation is made by the Duke of Norfolk on the nomination of the Bishop.

In his final speech day address he stressed that 'Character-building is the great feature and the great glory of English Public Schools.'

He continued 'To all present today, and particularly to those who have boys in the School, I say goodbye; and I trust that all the boys at present in the School will grow up to be a credit to it and a blessing to their parents.' Many presentations were then made.

The Old Framlinghamians entertained Dr. Inskip to dinner at the Great White Horse Hotel in Ipswich, under the Presidency of Charles Wallace, who played a glowing tribute to his work. He referred to the difficult time when he became Head to the fact that in the reserve now stood the sum of £8,000. Further tributes followed at great length. The next day at the School the Old Framlinghamians presented the fine portrait of Dr. Inskip, which Miss Myra Luxmore had painted as a commission from the OFs with a replica from the artist for the Inskips.

By any measure his impact upon the fortunes of Framlingham College were immense. Headmaster for twenty-six years from 1887-1913, he arrived one year after the Governors had appealed to the people of Suffolk to rescue the school from £3000 of debt, when the total number of pupils was 72. By 1899 the school was full with over 300 in attendance.

He died on 28 May 1934 at the age of 81. In 1953 the SOF placed a tablet in the College Chapel in memory of him – see below.

