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FRANCIS RUSSELL 2ND EARL OF BEDFORD,

Jacobus Houbraken, 18th Century

A framed copper plate engraving of James Graham, Francis Russell, second Earl of Bedford by the Dutch engraver Jacobus Houbrackenn, struck in 1740.

DIMENSIONS: 43.2cm (17") High, 29.2cm (11^½") Wide, 2cm (0^¾") Deep

PRICE: £120

STOCK CODE: AD1597



HISTORY

"RUSSELL, FRANCIS, second Earl of Bedford (1527?-1585), only son of John Russell, first earl of Bedford, by his wife Anne, was born probably in 1527. He was educated at the King's Hall, Cambridge. When quite young, Edward Underhill is said to have saved him from drowning in the Thames, a good office which was afterwards repaid when Underhill was in trouble on account of his opinions (*Narrative of the Reformation*, Camd. Soc., p. 140). He was with his father in France on the expedition of 1544. When Edward VI was crowned, Russell was one of the forty who were created K.B. (2 Feb. 1546-7). From 1547 to 1552 he was M.P. for Buckinghamshire, and is said to have been the first heir to a peerage who sat in the House of Commons. In 1547 he was sheriff of Bedfordshire. In 1548 he was at the head of one of the enclosure commissions, and the next year helped his father in suppressing the rebellion in the west of England. When his father was created earl of Bedford in 1550, he was styled Lord Russell. At the surrender of Boulogne certain hostages were required, one of whom was to have been Lord Russell, but he was released from that duty, and escorted the French nobles who were sent to England as sureties from Dover to London (cf. Dasent, *Acts of Privy Council*, ii. 421). On 11 Nov. 1551 he attended the queen-dowager of Scotland when she came from

Hampton Court to London (Machyn, *Diary*, Camd. Soc. p. 11). His religious views were protestant, and in 1551 he attended the conferences on the sacrament held at the houses of Sir Richard Moryson [see MORISON] and Sir William Cecil, lord Burghley [q. v.] In February 1551-2 he took his seat in the House of Lords as Baron Russell.

From 1553 to 1580 Russell seems to have held the office of lord warden of the Stannaries. His name appears, with his father's, as witnessing the deed of 21 June 1553 by which Edward settled the crown on Lady Jane Grey. After Mary's accession he was consequently for a time in the custody, first of the sheriff of London, and afterwards of the warden of the Fleet prison; later, Lord Rich took charge of him. While in prison John Bradford (1510?-1555) wrote to him sympathetically (Foxe). Imprisonment did not reduce him to acquiescence with Mary's régime; he was secretly in Wyatt's plot (cf. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of Engl.* iv. 70), and confessed that he had carried letters from Elizabeth to Wyatt (*ib.* p. 80). On 14 March 1554-5 he became second Earl of Bedford on the death of his father. He now escaped to Geneva, and made the acquaintance of the foreign reformers. In 1557 he was at Venice, whence he sent a Latin letter to Bullinger. He returned in that year, and was one of the captains in the English army at the battle of St. Quentin, of which he wrote an account to Sir William Cecil (Tytler, *Edward VI and Mary*, p. 494). In March 1557-8 he was once more in England, and was made lord-lieutenant of the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall, and of the city of Exeter; he was busy at this time in levying men for the French war.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, Bedford was at once sworn of the privy council, and took an active part in the religious settlement, being a commissioner to receive the oath of supremacy, and one of those who assisted in the drawing up of the new liturgy. On 23 Jan. 1560-1 he was sent on an embassy to Charles IX of France to congratulate him on his accession; he also visited Mary Queen of Scots, and tried to obtain her adhesion to the treaty of Edinburgh. He kept up his foreign connections, and in June 1561 unsuccessfully invited Peter Martyr to come to England (cf. 1 *Zurich Letters*, p. 81).

In February 1563-4 he was appointed warden of the east marches and governor of Berwick. Berwick he found in a state of decay. He strengthened the fortifications, and was an active border leader (cf. Wiffen, i. 404). On 23 April 1564 he was elected K.G. On 17 Nov. 1564 he was named a commissioner with Thomas Randolph to treat as to Mary Queen of Scots' marriage.

When news arrived of her resolve to marry Darnley, he went to London to attend important meetings of the privy council, and immediately afterwards was appointed lord-lieutenant of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and the bishopric of Durham, with orders to keep a large force ready. In September 1565 he was invited to settle disputes among the members of the Dutch church in London. On the border he seems to have acted diplomatically, and it was through him that Elizabeth supplied the lords of the congregation with money. When they fled over the border, Bedford received them at Carlisle, for which, though it was the legitimate outcome of Elizabeth's policy, he was blamed by Cecil. Among other communications which he made to the council at this time was a long account of Rizzio's murder, dated from Berwick, 27 March 1565–1566, and signed by himself and Randolph. Later in this year (December) he was proxy for the queen at the baptism of James. He travelled on this occasion with a considerable retinue. In October 1567 he gave up the Berwick appointment apparently on the ground of ill-health, but he was constantly in attendance at the council. He was sent into Wales when the northern insurrection broke out in 1569, but later went into Sussex. In 1570 the queen visited Chenies, while Bedford was away at Coventry. Although he wrote to Cecil expressing a wish to see Norfolk released, Bedford was one of those who sat in judgment on the duke in January 1571–2. In July 1572 the queen again visited him, this time at Woburn Abbey, much apparently to the earl's dismay, as he knew by experience how expensive the honour was. In 1576 he was lord-president of Wales, and ordered to raise one thousand men for Ireland; the same year he was made lieutenant of the Garter. In 1581 he was one of the commissioners for negotiating the Anjou marriage; but from this time his health slowly gave way, though he was appointed to the office of chief justice and justice in eyre of the royal forests south of the Trent on 26 Feb. 1583–4. He died at Bedford House, Strand, 28 July 1585, and was buried on 14 Sept. at Chenies church, where a monument, with figures of himself and his first wife, was erected. A portrait by Zuccherò, which was engraved by Houbraken, is at Woburn.

Bedford was a kindly man, and liked by those about him. Bishop Pilkington made him in 1571 one of the overseers of his will, and he was a benefactor to a son of Gualter, who came to Oxford in 1573. He was godfather to Sir Francis Drake. Many books were dedicated to him, among them Cooper's 'Chronicle,' and Becon's 'Christian Knight' and 'Monstrous Merchandise of the Roman Bishops.' He left money to University College, Oxford, and founded a free school

at Woburn. He also gave building stone to Trinity and Corpus Christi Colleges, Cambridge.

Bedford married, first, Margaret, daughter of Sir John St. John, and widow of Sir John Gostwick of Willington, Bedfordshire; she died at Woburn on 26 Aug. 1562. By her he had (1) Edward, lord Russell, who died in or after 1573, without issue. (2) John, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, and widow of Sir Thomas Hoby [q. v.]; he was summoned to parliament as Lord Russell, but died without male issue at Highgate in 1584, being buried in Westminster Abbey. (3) Francis, who, after a good deal of active service, was killed on the borders by the Scots, 27 July 1585, and buried at Alnwick; by his wife, Julian Foster, he was father of Edward, third earl of Bedford. (4) Sir William Russell (afterwards Lord Russell of Thornhaugh) [q. v.] (5) Anne, married, 11 Nov. 1565, to Ambrose Dudley, earl of Warwick [q. v.] (6) Elizabeth, married, 7 Aug. 1582, to William Bouchier, earl of Bath. (7) Margaret, married, 24 June 1577, to George Clifford, earl of Cumberland. Bedford married, secondly, about September 1566, Bridget, daughter of John, lord Hussey, widow of Sir Richard Morysine [see Morison], and of Henry, earl of Rutland. She died 12 Jan. 1600–1, and was buried at Watford”

- Dictionary of national Biography