

Quex - its story

Quex, which has been spelt in many different ways, was the seat of an ancient family who bore that name many centuries ago. (The name is still here in use today – Nov 2016.)

The house is in the Parish of Birchington, but was, until the revision of the boundaries, between Birchington, Margate and Acol, partly in Birchington and partly in the Ville of Acol, the boundary running through the mansion. It has always been an important estate in Thanet and has its own private Chantry Chapel in Birchington Parish Church, built to provide a venue for a priest to pray for the souls of family members.

Quex House today

1

This building dates from the early 1800s when the original house was pulled down and the present mansion built. This picture shows the dining room on the right, which was added in 1888, and the Museum on the left, known as the Powell-Cotton Museum, added at the beginning of the 20th century.



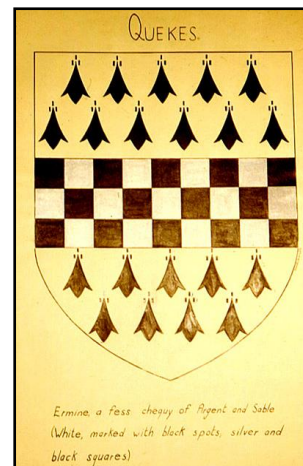
The name Quex is interesting. It was another name for the ancient game of chequers which was played with marbles or pebbles upon a board which was divided into alternate black and white squares like a draughts board. The word is derived from the word “chequer” an old French word from which we get the word “exchequer” and “cheque”. In the Middle Ages the arithmetic of the King’s Taxes and accounts was worked out on the exchequer board of black and white squares. (quex = check)

The Coat of Arms of the Quex

2

The Quex shield is a white shield marked with black spots, known as ermine, with a band (or ‘fess’) of silver and black squares across the centre, described in the language of Heraldry, ‘Ermine, a fess chequy of argent and sable’. This coat of arms of the Quex family is a pun on the name, which means ‘checked’ and it can be seen on many of the monuments in the Quex Chapel of Birchington Church, and also in St. John’s Church, Margate, in Whitstable Parish Church and in Sheppey – all with Quex family connections.

But the Quex family were not the first owners of the estate in Birchington. Before the Quex family were the Parkers. We know little of this family except that they were resident



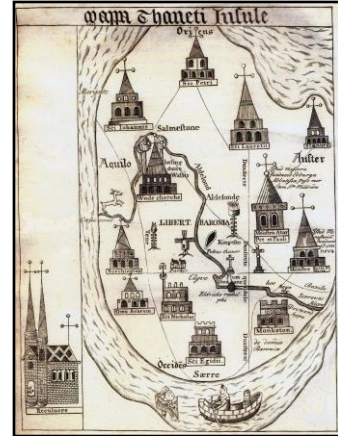
in Thanet in at least the late 1300s, but their residence called “Parker” on the estate where Quex now stands, is shown on the earliest known Map of Thanet, drawn by Thomas of Elmham, a monk of St. Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury, in 1414.

Elmham’s Map – 1414

3

Quex House was originally owned by the Parker family. ‘Parker’ House is shown not far from Birchington, near a windmill and a beacon, but this house is no longer in existence. Its position was very near the present Quex mansion. We have records of the Parker family dating from the early 1400’s, leaving money in their wills to the Church of Birchington and also to the Church of St. Nicholas at Wode, or Woodchurch, nearby.

It is possible that this family donated towards the cost of the Church at Birchington and also that of



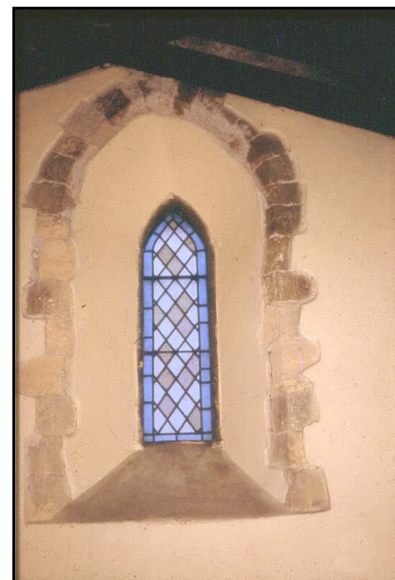
Woodchurch. The Church of St. Nicholas at Wode, once nearly as big as Birchington Church, is no longer standing, but its site can be found in Church Meadow at Woodchurch Farm.

3a Cecilia Parker, the last heiress of the family, married John Quex, whose family first appear as owners of land in Thanet between 1200 and 1300. From documents in Canterbury Cathedral Library it is evident that it was through this marriage that he gained possession of the Parker estates. As owners of this estate they were important and influential people not only in Birchington but in Thanet and Kent. Many held important positions in the county and country. They owned a part of the Church and this was where they were buried. The name of the house changed through the custom of people referring to their ownership as “Quex, his house”, which soon became “Quex’s House” – and eventually Quex House. There are seven versions of the name in the chapel

5

Birchington Church - the Quex Chapel

This was, and still is, the private chapel and property of the owners of the Quex estate. It is one of the oldest parts of the Church dating from about 1250. Here are found the monuments to the owners and the families of the Quex estate from the earliest times. In this chapel are found monuments and memorials in brass, stone, alabaster, and marble of the owners and their families buried in the vault beneath. This chapel was not only the private chapel of the owners of the Quex estate but also it was the Lady Chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. High up in



the west wall of this chapel is a **Lancet Window** which provided much needed additional light to the chapel.

In 1966 Christopher Powell-Cotton (son of Percy, who started the Museum), re-installed an altar in the Chapel and had the old pews turned from facing the chancel, as they had done since 1863, to facing the altar once more. During the Reformation the altar was taken down and services were no longer held there. People were forbidden to pray for the dead any more.

The chapel is now used for weekday services, but is still owned and maintained by the owner of the Quex estate.

Brasses in Quex Chapel

The earliest brass in this chapel is a memorial brass to **John Quek** and his son **Richard**, depicted as a miniature by his side.

6

He died in 1449 as shown on the inscription and was buried in the vault beneath. John is wearing the civilian dress of the period with an analace or large hunting knife hanging from his girdle. He wears boots laced up on the inner sides. It is this John who married the heiress of the Parkers. He probably built or enlarged the old manor house of Quek which stood until 1806 when it was demolished and replaced by the present mansion. John was an important man in Thanet and commissioned to collect taxes in 1486.



7



By his will he left 10 marcs to erect 'a window of glass' in the chancel of St. Mary, Birchington, or the Quex Chapel. On his death in 1449 he was succeeded by his son **Richard Quek**. The inscription on this memorial brass is missing but the historian, John Lewis, in his *'History of Thanet'*, published in 1723, gives the inscription which was there at that time. This gives the date of his death as 1459. In his will he asked to be buried in the chapel of St. Mary, (or the Quex Chapel). He left money to the churches of Monkton, (our 'Mother' church until 1871) Birchington and St. Nicholas at Wode. (not Wade)

We think that Richard was followed by another John Quek, as a John Quekes of Quekes bought Grimgell Manor at Whitstable in 1483. We do not appear to have any other record of him.

Towards the end of the 1400s the estate passed to the Crispe family when Agnes Quek, the heiress, married a Crispe and the estate remained with the Crispe family for over 200 years, until the early 1700s. In the late 1400s there were Crispes in Thanet, Canterbury, Whitstable and elsewhere. Originally the Crispes came from Stanlake in Oxfordshire.

8

John Crispe married Agnes Quek. There is a memorial brass to them in the Quex Chapel but unfortunately the effigies of both the adults have disappeared and the inscription remaining is not complete. Agnes died in 1533, as seen from the inscription, but the date of the death



of John was never filled in. We think he died soon after in 1536.

This John was Sheriff of Kent in 1519 and assisted in the reckoning of the Church Lands in 1526, which forms one of the first entries in the Churchwardens Account Books. The brass shows their 8 sons and 7 daughters.

John Crispe was followed by his eldest son known later as John Crispe the Younger of Quek and Cleve. This John married three times and there are memorial brasses to each of his three of his wives.

John's first wife was Alys Denne

9

Her brass shows her in the dress of the period with her daughter, probably Alicia, on the lower part of the brass. Much of the inscription is missing but was all there when Lewis wrote his History of Thanet in 1723. Alys died in 1518. She was the mother of the great Sir Henry Crispe, commemorated on the Altar tomb. Her eldest son was John Crispe of Cleve who was buried in Monkton Church and another son was William who became Lord Lieutenant of Dover Castle and was buried in the Castle Church.



John's second wife was Margaret Rotherham

10

Her brass shows her in the dress of the period with the pointed head dress fashionable from 1490 to 1550. She died in 1528, just before the seismic changes orchestrated by Henry VIII. Although he set in motion such massive changes in thought, beliefs and actions in worship, his own religious practices hardly changed at all.

John's third wife was also Margaret

11

She died in 1533 probably in childbirth, or soon after the birth and death of her first child since the baby is represented on the brass in its baptismal robe. Such a child is known as a chrisom child. The head is missing and has been for many years.

A "Chrisom" was a square of white linen which was used for covering the child at its baptism, as an emblem of purity. A child who died before it was a month old was buried in its chrisom, which was bound round the little body with ornamental folds or strips of linen.



The Crispe family had its Coat of Arms

12

This can be seen in Birchington, Margate, Monkton, Whitstable and Boxley churches. It is a black chevron having five silver horse shoes on it, on a gold background, or in the language of Heraldry, Or, on a chevron sable, five horseshoes argent.

John Crispe the younger was succeeded by his second son Henry who became the most notable of the Crispe family, the great Sir Henry and became known as the King of the Island.



The Altar Monument

13

He was the rich man of the family but how he obtained his wealth, by trade or by his first wife is not known. He married his first wife Katherine Scott of Scotts Hall, Smeeth who died in 1544, and was buried in the Quex Chapel. Her death is recorded in the Church Burial Register. The recumbent stone figures represent Sir Henry and his first wife Lady Katherine Scott. Henry is in armour with his sword on his left side and Katherine in clothes of the period. The feet of the Lady rest on a greyhound while those of the knight on a mutilated lion.



Round the memorial are the armorial bearings of the Crispes and Scotts. Scott is three Catherine wheels with a bordure engrailed, or three black Catherine wheels with a silver background surrounded by a red engrailing. Katherine had one son Nicholas who was buried in Whitstable Church. Beneath this is the oldest one in the chapel, almost certainly a Parker tomb, for whom the Chantry Chapel was built.



13 a + b



With no visible inscription, this is difficult to prove, but it seems odd to be in such a prestigious position and be an unknown person in a privately owned chapel.

In the same year as Katherine's death on 23rd July 1545 Sir Henry married his second wife Anne Hazelhurst in Birchington Church. The marriage is duly recorded in the Church Register of Marriages.

Sir Henry Crispe was Churchwarden for 1539, 1540 and 1541. When he was Churchwarden in 1539 Birchington Church purchased its first Bible for 20 shillings, as recorded in the Churchwardens Account Book.

He was Sheriff of Kent in 1546. In the reign of Edward VI he was appointed to be one of the Church Goods Commissioners who collected inventories of all Church ornaments and furniture in Kent, at the time the Church was moving away from Rome. He had the care of the Kentish coasts committed to him. He died in 1575 and was buried in the Quex Chapel and his burial is recorded in the Church Register of Burials.

The great Sir Henry was succeeded by his son John whose mother was Ann Hazelhurst. He was born in 1551 and his Baptism is recorded in the Church Baptisms Register. At the age of 22 in 1573, in Birchington he married his first wife Maria Harlackenden who according to the Burial Register died within a month.

A year later he married in Birchington Church his second wife, Elizabeth Roper and two years later their son Henry was born. The sponsors or Godparents of this son were his uncle, William, Lieutenant of Dover Castle, and his aunt, Lady Anna Crispe, who later became his guardian.

John Crispe died in 1583 when only 32 years of age and was buried in the Quex Chapel.

Bust Monument, Lower three busts

14

The lower three busts of this mural monument show John Crispe and his two wives, Margaret Harlackenden and Elizabeth Roper, who died in 1626. This mural monument is a remarkable work of art. It is by the celebrated sculptor Joshua Marshall who succeeded his father as Master Mason to Charles II. This monument is unique being the only one in England



with six busts on the one monument. The busts are probably Italian white marble and the black inscription panels of Purbeck marble.

As John's son Henry was only seven years of age when he succeeded his father, his aunt, Lady Anna Crispe who married a Mr. Philip Browne, as recorded in the Church Register of Marriages, became his guardian and took up residence at Quex.

Mr. Philip Browne's name and Quex appears at the head of the list of those Birchington land owners and tenants who contributed towards the cost of fitting out ships of Dover in 1588 to help fight against the Spanish Armada.

The Armada Sess

Birchington was a limb of the Cinque Port of Dover and the Mayor and Juratts or Council, appointed a Deputy, usually one of the influential persons in Birchington to be responsible to Dover for collection of the rates,



seeing that all documents relating to Birchington were sent to Dover for signing and sealing, and generally with the Churchwardens, governing the place. By this cess Birchington was charged by Dover to raise £5 16s 8d towards the cost of fitting out of a ship. Mr. Philip Browne paid XIIIs.

15a

15



Six bust monument, top three busts

16

This young boy Henry, when he grew up married three times but only the burial of the third is entered in the Birchington Burial Register. The top three busts show Sir Henry with the busts of his first two wives. That on the left is Marie Monins of Walderslade who died in 1606 and that on the right is his second wife, Ann Nevinson of Eastry who died in 1629.

There seems to have been considerable trouble between Henry and his second wife Ann Nevinson and her relatives over his lands and her marriage settlement. It appears that Sir Henry nearly lost all of his inheritance to his wife, her relatives and friends and they were recovered only by an Act of Parliament in James I reign. The marriage was not a happy one so it seems. Barrett in his History of the Ville of Birchington has quite a full story of the affair. His third wife Francesca we know little about except that her burial is recorded in the Burial Register.

This Sir Henry was an important man, being Captain of the local Militia, was Deputy Lord Warden of Dover Castle, and was Churchwarden. He lived during the Civil War between the King and Parliament in the 1640's and although he signed the Vow and Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant he was no doubt a Royalist.



King Charles I

Sir Henry was probably too old to take an active part in the war, but information was laid against him for helping the Royalists.

It was during his time that the Parishes of Birchington and Acol or Wode were united in 1604. The Order provided that each parish, Birchington and Woodchurch should appoint one Churchwarden and that each should appoint two Collectors or Overseers of the Poor and one or two Surveyors of the Highways. The custom then commenced of each set of officers keeping separate accounts and each parish having its own assessments or rating. In all these early

assessments Sir Henry Crispe's name appears rated for his lands in Birchington and in Woodchurch or Acol.

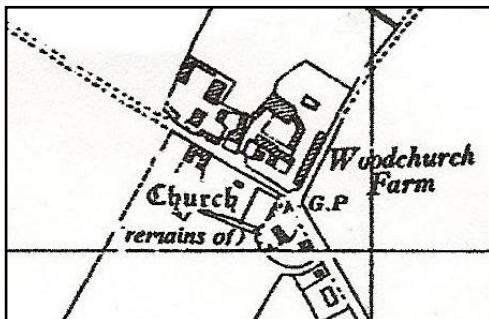
17



Demolished Woodchurch

In 1602 he was presented to the Court at the Visitation of the Archdeacon of Canterbury for pulling down part of the Church at Woodchurch and the adjoining schoolhouse. It was alleged that the said Sir Henry ordered some of his workmen to take the stones from the walls and the lead to his house called Quex and some of the timber taken to his new built house at Woodchurch. He died in 1647 and was

18a



buried in the Quex Chapel as recorded in the Burial Register.

18b He left no issue so the estate passed to his cousin Sir Henry Crispe of Great Chart who is known in Birchington History as "Bonjour Crispe". He was the son of Henry Crispe, a younger brother of John Crispe, and Ann Culepeper of Aylesford. He must have been quite elderly when he succeeded. He married

twice. First to Marie Culpeper of Bedgebury, Goudhurst who died in 1618 having had five children, three of whom died before their mother. Their burials are recorded in the Burial Register.

The alabaster monument to Marie Culpeper 19

The alabaster monument in the Quex Chapel is to Marie Culpeper. The kneeling figures are of Sir Henry Crispe and of the Lady Marie with their 4 sons and 1 daughter. Three of the children are holding skulls to denote they died before their mother. They are dressed in early Stuart style with ruffs, the children similar to their parents. The amorine or cupids above the coats of arms denote asleep, Rest, the one holding a spade, Labour.



The authorship of this lovely monument is uncertain but it has some features which indicate that it may have come from the celebrated Johnson studio at Southwark. The Johnsons were distinguished sculptors and Gerard Johnson was the sculptor of the world famous monument in Stratford on Avon Church. Bonjour Crispe had this memorial erected for he says in his will, "to be Interred in the Parish Church of Birchington neare the Tombe by mee erected for my wife and children now departed."

The two children who survived their mother were Nicholas and Henry. It was Nicholas who married Thomasina Denne of Canterbury who did so much to free his father when he was kidnapped in 1657.

It was on the night of 18th July 1657 when 40 armed men plundered Quex and forcibly took the old Sir Henry from his bed and carried him in his own coach to Gorend and then by ship to Flanders and held him prisoner at Bruges until a ransom of £3000 had been paid. The leader of the raiding party called himself Captain Lendall. Sir Nicholas Crispe, Henry's eldest son petitioned Oliver Cromwell, the Protector, to allow the ransom to be paid, but Cromwell would not allow it as he thought it was a plot to obtain money for the use of King Charles II then in exile. Unfortunately Sir Nicholas died, in November 1657, before anything could be done. It appears the Lady Thomasina Crispe, widow of Sir Nicholas took up the case with the Protector and the Council, and in the end Bonjour Crispe was released from his imprisonment and after eight months absence returned to Quex. During those eight months the only words of French he learnt were "Bonjour" and tradition has it that after this event when meeting parishioners in Birchington he greeted them with "Bonjour". Hence he is known in the history of Birchington as "Bonjour" Crispe.

Barrett in his History of the Ville of Birchington has a detailed account of the events. Bonjour Crispe's second wife was Frances Hooper, widow of John Hooper and daughter of Thomas Roberts of Glassenbury. She died in 1646. Bonjour Crispe died in 1663 and was buried in the Quex Chapel where a ledger stone and inscription mark the site.

This alabaster monument was moved to the St. Margaret's Chapel of Birchington Church in 1863 and then returned to the Quex Chapel to its present position in 1899. A tablet under the monument commemorates this.

Alabaster Monument

This monument was moved from Quex Chapel into St Margaret's Chapel in the early 1700s, for some unknown reason, and then later moved back into Quex again. During one of these moves, the two columns on either side with the two their coats of arms in the top corners were reversed. When Lewis wrote his History of Thanet in 1723 he included a drawing of this monument showing this.

Marie Culpeper Monument, Coat of Arms

20

The coats of arms on the top of this monument are interesting.

The shield in the centre with the helm and mantling quartering show,

1. Quex, the original owners.
2. Crispe, the family who followed.
3. Denne, silver background with a flaunche on either side, (a flaunche on a shield is formed by a curved line from the top corner of the Shield to the base), each having a leopards face in gold.

Alys Denne was the wife of John Crispe and the mother of the great

Great Sir Henry Crispe, (stone monument) and the great grand mother of Bonjour Crispe.

4. Hazelburst, gold background, on a black bar with indented edges across the centre, 3 leopards faces in silver, and on a black ? across the top 3 hazel bushes.

Ann Hazelhurst was the second wife of the great Sir Henry Crispe, whom he married in Birchington Church in 1545. Bonjour Crispe was her grandson.



The shields on the top of the columns have the coats of arms of the families the Crispes married into.

On the left are the coats of arms of –

Culepeper, Marie, Bonjour's first wife was a Culepeper.

Culepeper, Bonjour Crispe's mother was a Culepeper.

Haut,

Roberts, Bonjour Crispe's second wife was a Roberts of Glassenbury.

On the right are the coats of arms of –

Quex, Crispe, Culepeper, Crispe.

Denne, Hazelburst, Haut, Roberts.

As has been stated before, the second Sir Henry Crispe and Bonjour Crispe lived during the Civil War between King Charles I and Parliament from 1643. Although both were undoubtedly Royalists they were both too old to take an active part in the war, but we have their signatures on documents at this time.

Birchington Church possesses two very rare historical documents dating from this time, The Vow and Covenant, and the Solemn League and Covenant, both of which were signed by members of the Crispe family. Only 5 copies of these rare documents remain in Kent as they were ordered to be burnt in 1661 after the Restoration of King Charles II.

Both of these documents which are really solemn undertakings to preserve the Reformed Religion in England and promising to assist the forces of Parliament against the forces of the King, and in no way to assist the forces raised by the King, were signed by all men in the Parish.

The Vow and Covenant

The Vow and Covenant is in the handwriting of Mr. George Stancombe, Minister at Birchington at this time. After the Covenant had been read out by the Minister from the pulpit on two Sundays following, July 10th and July 17th, 1643, it was signed by all the men present, 171 in all. But only 41 actually signed their names and 129 made their marks as they were unable to write, so Mr. Stancombe then added their names and "I signed", followed by the mark.

George Stancombe signed first followed by Edward Crispe, and Henry Bonjour Crispe. Nicholas Crispe and Sir Henry also signed but probably on the second Sunday. In the second column is the name of Jo Coleman who gave the name to Coleman's Stairs Road.

On the following March 3rd, and 10th 1643, (note the year 1643 is the same as before, because at this time the year commenced on 25th March, so the following March 3rd and 10th was still 1643).

21



The Solemn League and Covenant

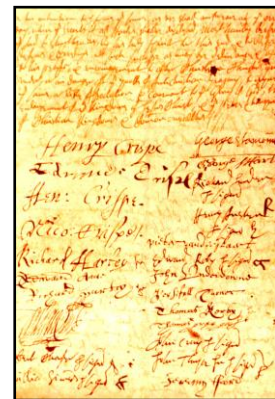
This was read out and signed in Birchington Church.

The Minister read the whole Covenant distinctly while the men stood and listened. At the end, each one present took the Vow by raising the right hand then signing or making a mark. This time it was signed by 168 men, 127 making their marks. Again George Stancombe, the Minister, signed first followed by Sir Henry Crispe, Edward Crispe, his uncle, Bonjour Crispe, and Nicholas Crispe, Bonjour's son.

On the death of Bonjour Crispe in 1663 not having any surviving children, the estate passed to his cousin, Capt. Thomas Crispe, the eldest son of his younger brother.

As already stated Bonjour Crispe's son Nicholas died while Bonjour was held prisoner in 1657. Nicholas and his wife Thomasina Denne were buried in the Quex Chapel where a marble mural monument with fluted ionic pillars commemorates them.

22



Ionic Columns Monument

On the left panel is the name of Sir Nicholas Crispe and on the centre panel that of Anna Powle, his only daughter.

On the right panel is the name of Thomasina Denne, the wife of Sir Nicholas Crispe. Lady Thomasina was one of the two persons in Birchington who were buried in linen after the passing of the Burial in Woollen Act of 1678.

This Act required all persons to be buried in woollen, a means of helping the woollen trade. At a burial an affidavit was required to be made that the Act had been complied with under a penalty of £5 if disobeyed. There are a large number of affidavits in the Birchington Register of Burials, a number made to Thomas Crispe.

Mistress Crispe, probably Thomasina Crispe, was one of those who contributed in Birchington to the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral after the Great Fire of London. She contributed 1shilling out of a total of 7s 3½ d in 1678.

23



St. Paul's Cathedral Collection

Thomas Crispe married in Holland. In 1662 he paid Chimney Tax or Hearth Tax for 17 chimneys at Quex. No other house in the district had that number of chimneys. This tax was a tax levied in the time of Charles II when every hearth and stove was charged at 2s yearly.

Thomas Crispe died in 1680 and was buried in the Quex Chapel, where a ledger stone with an inscription marks the spot. He was the other person in Birchington who was buried in linen after the passing of the Burial in Woollen Act of 1679.

On the death of Thomas Crispe in 1680 the estate passed to his four daughters who became joint owners, but from 1687 the estate was occupied by a Mr. John Ball, Gentleman who paid the sess or rate up to 1700.

It was during this period from about 1689 to 1700 that William III who was also ruler of Holland, on several occasions stayed at Quex, while waiting to embark at Margate on his several visits to Holland. It was frequently necessary to wait for favourable winds before sailing. He would take up residence at Quex Mansion while his guards encamped in the adjoining enclosure. The Birchington Churchwardens Accounts show how the people of Birchington welcomed the King by the ringing of the church bells.

i.e. 1697 May 28th Spent on the ringers when the

King came to Quex

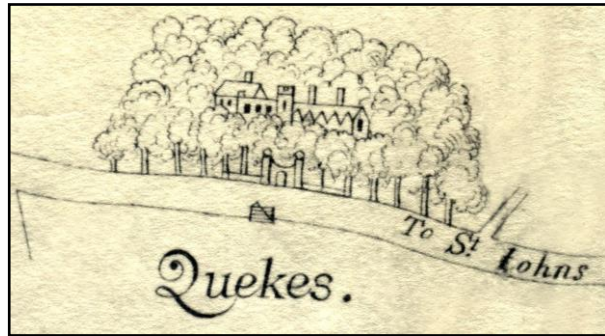
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24



The Quex Mansion

The King stayed in the original mansion, probably built or enlarged by John Quek in the 1400s. This drawing is from Thomas Hill's map of 1688, showing 'Quekes House' with the road to 'St John's' going very near the front of the mansion.



25

Quex Mansion 1781

26

If you look carefully at the roof of the centre portion you can see there are problems with the roof. It looks as if a chimney has fallen down at some point leaving a gaping hole.



It was from this version of the house that Bonjour Crispe was kidnapped.

Before this mansion was demolished in 1806 the room occupied by the King and said to be the 'Royal Bedchamber' was shown to visitors. Much of the building was of brick with some stone work, but was in dire need of some repairs.

The State Chair

27

The chair in which the King is said to have sat can still be seen at Quex. This chair was also used by King George IV at Ramsgate on the occasion of his embarkation to Holland in 1821.

After holding the estate for some 20 years the four joint owners, the four daughters of Thomas Crispe, sold the greater portion of it to John Buller of Morvall in Cornwall, a merchant of the City of London. The estate sold included not just land situated in Birchington, St. Nicholas at Wode, and Monkton, but also "All that Isle (aisle) and Buildings adjoining to the north side of the Parish Church of Birchington belonging or appertaining to the said mansion House of Quex." This of course refers to the Quex Chapel.



Among the 4 co-heiresses, the four daughters of Thomas Crispe, was the unmarried and youngest daughter, Mistress Anna Gertruy Crispe who is so well known in the history of Birchington. It is to her that so many of the young people of Birchington and Acol owe a debt of gratitude, as it was Mistress Anna who was the founder of the Crispe Charity. She died in 1707 and in her will bequeathed 47 acres of farmland, now known as the Crispe Farm to the Overseers of Birchington and Acol, the income from which she

directed should be used to supply wearing apparel for 5 widows of Birchington and Acol at Christmas, the Verger 20s yearly to keep clean the “Isle and Monuments belonging to Quex” and the remainder for the founding of a school for poor children and for education.

Monument Anna Gertruy Crispe

28

The inscription on the lovely white marble monument with a bust to Anna Gertruy Crispe in the Quex Chapel sets out the terms of the Will relating to the Crispe Charity. The monument is by William Palmer, a brilliant sculptor thought to be based on a portrait. As a result of this legacy the first charity school was founded in Birchington and remained in existence for well over 100 years until the 1860, soon after the school in Park Lane was built. The first “Schoolmate” was Elenor Jarvis who was paid £6 per year.

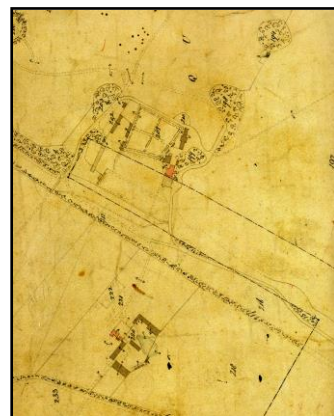


The scheme regulating the charity had been revised several times. The last revision was in 1957 when the Charity Commissioners empowered the Governors to make grants to young people for the purchase of tools, books, apparatus etc, to assist their entry into a trade or profession, to make grants to clubs and societies catering for young people - considerably more than in 1708. From early times to 1935 the boundary separating the Parish of Birchington from the Ville of Wood or Acol went through the mansion of Quex and as a result part of the mansion was in Acol and part in Birchington. This is shown on the Tithe Map and the old Ordnance Survey Maps.

29

Tithe Map and Ordnance Survey Map

This was the cause of many disputes as to which Parish was liable for any Poor Relief to be paid to servants of Quex by the Overseers. The boundary went through the front door. In the Churchwardens' Account Books are 3 Agreements written out, dated 1711, 1736 and 1788 made between the two parishes which amicably settled the matter. It was agreed that if any servants at Quex had to be relieved by the Overseers the charges should be equally shared by the two parishes.



The estate was sold a second time in 1718 to Sir Robert Furness of Waldershare. The reversioners held it until 1765 when it was sold a third time to Lord Holland who left several valuable relics at Quex although he never resided there.

The fourth and last sale took place in 1774 when the estate was purchased by John Powell, an ancestor of the present owner.

By this time the old mansion was showing signs of age and decay and was fast going to ruin. Bibliotheca Topographica Britanica of 1787 says the “weather penetrates into most of the apartments, the tiles are blown off, in many places, the windows demolished and only one part of it inhabited or indeed fit to be, except a small portion at the end which is occupied by a farmer.” Different farmers occupied a portion of the mansion from about 1740. In 1769 the mansion was advertised to let in the Kentish Gazette.

There is an oil painting of John Powell in the billiard room of the present mansion. On the death of John Powell the estate passed to his sister Elizabeth, who was married to William Roberts. William Roberts held the estate until his death in 1805 when it passed to his second son John Roberts who took his mother’s maiden name of Powell and became known as John Powell Powell. The Kilburn estate in N.W. London, passed to the eldest son Arthur Annesley Roberts who also took the maiden name of his mother, Powell. There are memorial tablets to William Roberts, his wife Elizabeth, and the two sons John and Arthur in the Quex Chapel.

Quex Mansion

As many parts of the old mansion were in ruin, the first act of John Powell Powell was to make an agreement with three workmen of Broadstairs to take down the mansion house, which was completed in May 1806, and then to make arrangements for the building of a new mansion. Squire Powell, as he was

30



known, expected the new house to be completed in about two years but it was not fit for occupation until 1813 when Squire Powell took up his residence at the new Quex mansion. It is said that the reason for the delay was the drain of workmen from Birchington for the Napoleonic War. The house is built in the Regency style. The above drawing was made in 1831.

Squire Powell appears to have taken an active interest in both parish and County affairs. He was made High Sheriff of the County in 1822 and in honour of this the name of the principle inn in the Birchington Square, the New Inn, was changed to that of The Powell Arms.

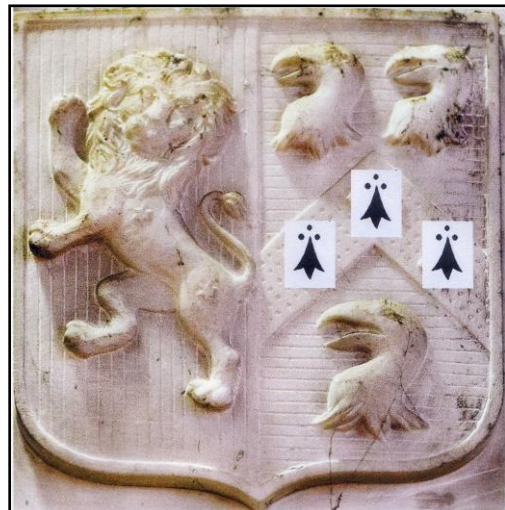
The Powell Arms

31

His shield holds the lion on the dexter side & three griffins’ heads separated by an ermine chevron on the sinister side.

In the new wing of the Powell Cotton Museum at Quex are a number of documents relating to this period of office as sheriff.

He subscribed generously towards the cost of the celebrations in Birchington when the war against Napoleon ended.



The Waterloo Tower

32

Squire Powell was a great lover of bells and there is a tradition that he offered to build a tower at the west end of Birchington Church and to place in it a peal of twelve bells but the offer was declined, so he built the Waterloo Tower (or Bell Tower) in Quex Park. It is a red brick building with an iron superstructure and a spire forming a land mark for many miles around. It



cost £10,000 and was named the Waterloo Tower after the Battle of Waterloo, built three years after Wellington's victory at that battle.

Adjoining the Waterloo Tower is the Mausoleum which was consecrated by the Bishop of Wakefield in 1897.

John Powell Powell loved not only bells but also the watching of ships, for which purpose he built the Observatory or Gun Tower on the north side of the Park in 1814.

The Observatory or Gun Tower

34

From here he watched the sailing ships of those days sailing up and down the Estuary and signalled to friends on board. In the Powell Cotton Museum are his telescopes and other instruments.

Until recently a number of cannon surrounded the tower, believed to be the largest collection in private hands of its kind in England. Most are now surrounding the house of Quex. Many are 17th and 18th century guns.

In 1848 John Powell Powell offered to provide a clock for the Church tower and Mr. Whish, the Minister at that time promised £20 towards fixing it. The offer was accepted at a Parish Meeting and "grateful thanks in a respectful letter ordered to be sent to Mr. Powell for his kind gift". Three weeks later however the gift was declined and curiously enough by the same people who had previously voted for its acceptance. The reason given for declining the clock was that the high Parochial Rates made it imprudent on the part of the parishioners to accept any gift that would add to the parochial burden. Squire Powell replied acknowledging the Parishioners thanks and he stated that he was fully aware of the propriety of their action in declining his offer of a clock. In the Churchwardens Book is written out a copy of Squire Powell's letter acknowledging the gift. The village had to wait 40 years before it had a clock.



The Workhouse

35



Birchington had its own Workhouse situated in Park Lane where the poor, the widows and the orphans were cared for. It was maintained by the Parish by means of rates. It was built on a ½ acre of Church land, sold by the Churchwardens to the Overseers of the Poor for £18. When the Isle of Thanet Union was formed and the Workhouse and Infirmary at Minster was built in 1835 the Birchington Workhouse next to the school was no longer required. John Powell Powell bought the buildings for £225.

The National School

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It was John Powell Powell who gave the land in Park Lane in 1845 to the Vicar and Churchwardens for the building of a school, before the old Charity School was closed. The Crispe Charity School continued to function until the 1860s, but still only catered for up to 24-5 pupils, while the National School could accommodate up to about 80 children initially. Schooling was not compulsory until 1870, but there were another 140



children not yet attending the school when it opened. So the little Charity School started by one of the heiresses of Quex Park was still well supported.

Memorial Tablet to John Powell Powell

37

John Powell Powell's wife, Charlotte, died in 1844 while John died in 1846. Both were buried in the Quex Chapel where there is a mural memorial tablet to them.

On his death the estate passed to his nephew Henry Powell Cotton of Kingsgate.



On Henry's death in 1881 the estate passed to his son Henry Horace Powell Cotton. It was during his time that the mansion was enlarged by the addition of the dining room in 1888. He

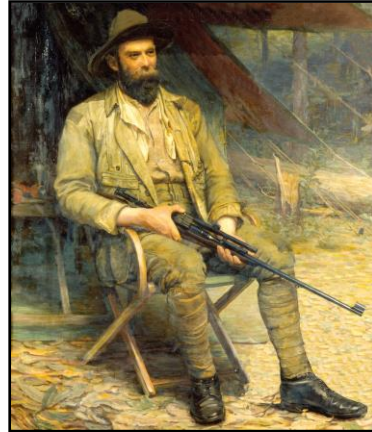
died in 1894 and his remains now rest in the Mausoleum in Quex Park. The screen separating the Quex Chapel from the Nave with the figures of Faith, Hope, Fortitude, Humility and Justice in coloured glass was erected in his memory.

He was succeeded by his son Percy Horace Gordon Cotton who adopted the name of Powell in conjunction with Cotton. He became famous as an explorer and a big game hunter and founder of the world -wide known Powell Cotton Museum.

Major Powell Cotton, the Big Game Hunter

Major Powell Cotton devoted some fifty years of his life to the study and collection of Indian and African fauna, ethnography and kindred interests. During one of his expeditions he married his wife Hannah in Nairobi Cathedral, then British East Africa, in 1905. He then took her on one of his expeditions to Uganda and the Congo, regions which rarely were visited by white women.

38



Homecoming of Major and Mrs Powell Cotton in 1907



The people of Birchington gave Major and Mrs Powell Cotton a wonderful welcome on their return. There was a great welcome at the station entrance and again at the Square. This photo shows in Station Road near the Square.

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Major and Mrs Powell Cotton

This photo was taken at Quex soon after their return from their honeymoon in Africa in 1907. They were both very conscious of the tight-knit community to which they had returned and the need to re-establish bridges between the two groups once more.



Homecoming of Major and Mrs Powell Cotton in 1907

40

Crowds of people met them at the railway station, then they drove in a carriage and pair along Station Road to the Square driving under these arches, where there was another great welcome. Then there were further welcomes at Quex Park. Souvenir postcards of the homecoming were published and sold by Pointer, the Stationer who had a Fancy Goods shop at the Post Office in the Square.



41 The Planting of the Christening Tree, Quex April 1918



This tree was planted to mark the christening of Christopher Powell Cotton, the son and heir, in April 1918. In the photo can be seen Major Powell Cotton, standing on the left of the hole. In the hole are the 2 proxy Godfathers, one in the Australian soldiers hat, a sergeant, and the other, a corporal, in the English soldiers cap. At this time Quex was a

V.A.D. Military Hospital, and these 2 soldiers were patients there.

In the hole are also Mr. Cornford, Senior, and Mr. Graham, the Estate Manager. Mrs Powell Cotton and her two daughters are on the left of the photo.

Quex as a V.A.D. Military Hospital, First World War



During the First World War of 1914-1918 the Quex mansion and the Quex Winter Gardens were used as a V.A.D. Military Hospital.

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Mrs Powell Cotton was the Commandant. It was opened in October 1914 and closed in early 1919. It had 46 beds.

The Winter Gardens was set out as the dining room. In this photo, Mrs Powell-Cotton is seated in the middle of the group of her nurses in Quex grounds.



42

The Old Scholars Club

Major Powell Cotton was generous in his support of Birchington activities. This building in Park Lane is the Old Scholars Club, now often called the Band Hut. It was built by some of the old scholars of the Park Lane Boys School on land conveyed to the Trustees by Major Powell Cotton, in 1928. The Club was formed in about 1928 for the physical, social and educational welfare of the Old Scholars of the School. The Old Boys built the place themselves under supervision.

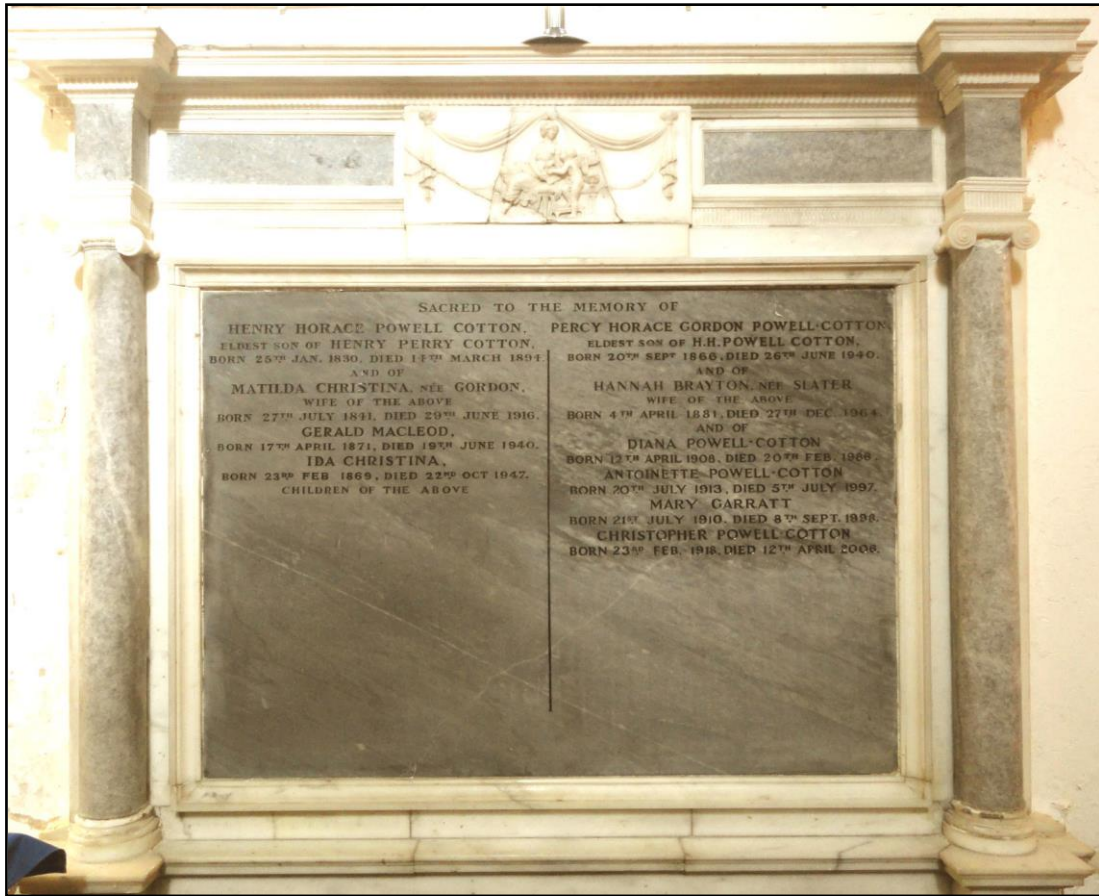
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The building was let to the Birchington Silver Band and the net profits from letting are used to help Youth Organisations of Birchington.

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Major Powell Cotton also gave land for the enlargement of the school in Park Lane.



This memorial is on the east wall of the Quex Chapel and commemorates Henry Horace Powell Cotton who died in 1894, and whose remains now rest in the mausoleum at Quex Park, and Major Powell Cotton who died in 1940 and who was also buried in the mausoleum. Later members of the family have now been added.

The Donkey Carriage

45

At Quex there are many historical, valuable and interesting things including furniture, glass, ceramics, silver etc.

The Donkey carriage was used by Mrs Powell-Cotton when convalescent for riding round the grounds.



The Chariot

46



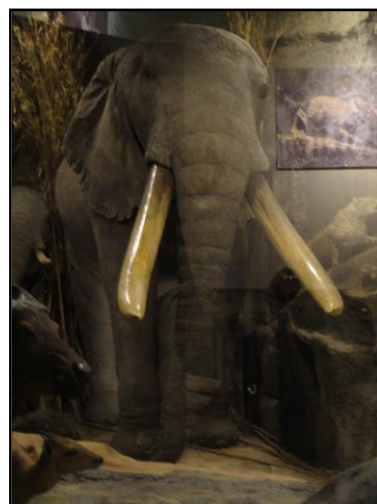
The coach (dated from 1837) was built for Captain Charles John Cotton of Kingsgate, at a total cost of £435. The receipt is still in the archives at Quex. There are relics of Napoleon at Quex, including a lock of his hair, Queen Ann, Chippendale and Sheraton furniture, Chinese and Japanese porcelain, silver with the Cotton crest, the pierced griffin, paintings and family portraits in oils, a four poster bed etc.

The Museum, the Elephant

Many people know Quex because of the Powell Cotton Museum founded by Major Powell Cotton who made 28 collecting expeditions to Africa and Asia. Members of his family have continued to collect ethnographical material for the Museum and now there is a fine collection of archaeological finds from the Birchington district, much collected and excavated by Miss Antonia Powell Cotton, of Pre-History, Belgic, Roman and Medieval times.

The Museum began in a single room in 1896 and was added to in 1901, 1928, 1957, 1965 and again in 1969. Scientists from all over the world are attracted to the Museum by the fine study series of skins, skulls and skeletons. It is one of the finest museums in this country outside of London. This photo shows one of the tallest elephants to come out of Africa and now stands in one of the very large display cases.

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There is also a large collection of local archaeological finds, many of them especially good. They were discovered by a young 14-year-old boy (Jimmy Beck), an erudite professor of archaeology (Frederick Worsfold) and Toni Powell-Cotton, sister of Christopher Powell-Cotton, who lived in the house all her life.

The Museum, a group of Antelope

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This display shows a small part of the antelope herd in another of the very large cases. The displays all have very realistic settings and the taxidermist set the animals in very lifelike poses. As one stands quietly looking into their world, the animals and birds almost seem to have life breathed into them. It seems surprising that they are not actually moving.



49

The Museum - Lion engaged in a fight with a buffalo

This photo, taken by Hedley Basford, shows the lion that once attacked Major Powell Cotton. He was only saved by the quick action of his porters.

It has been mounted attacking a buffalo and makes a riveting display, especially for excited younger visitors, as they can walk all round the glass case, to view the struggle from every angle.

This photo was taken by Hedley Bashford

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[In 1968, the spire of All Saints Church had to be re-shingled and the weather vane was re-gilded. While the scaffolding was up, Mr Walker took a number of photos, including this one of the weather vane].



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View of the Park from the Birchington Church Weather Vane

[While up in the heights, he took this photo showing the trees of the Park and in the distance the old Richborough Power Station. After descending, he took one more photo of the weathervane in all its gilded glory from the churchyard.]

The view below, taken from the spire in 1968, shows Park Lane as it leads towards Quex Park, set among its beautiful wooded grounds, with the old cooling towers on the horizon towards the right.

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Mr Christopher Powell Cotton in front of Quex House

51



Mr. Christopher Powell Cotton, C.M.G., M.B.E., M.C., J.P is seated in front of Quex House, surrounded by his staff and volunteers.

The only piece of the original house that was saved, when the old house was demolished in 1806, is the beautiful Tudor fireplace of Kent ragstone, now in the Billiard Room of the new house. It is ornamented with the Arms of the Crispes, the Tudor Rose, and various allegorical figures. Squire Powell Powell placed it in the kitchen of his new mansion where for many years its beauty was hidden by black lead, but the late Major Powell Cotton had it restored and placed in the Billiard Room.

Having included so many of the coats of arms of the owners of Quex in the village of Birchington, it seems only right and proper to end this little history of the old manorial seat with the Arms of Birchington itself.

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The Birchington Coat of Arms

In it you can see the Quex and the Crispe Coats of Arms on the top dexter quarter and the Arms of the Cinque Ports on its sinister side. This is because Birchington was, and is, a Non-Corporate Limb of the Cinque Port of Dover. The date when this arrangement began is lost in the mists of time, but it is recognised as a fact by the 14th century.

