

CRISPE CHARITY STORY

The Crispe Charity was founded by Mistress Anna Gertruy Crispe of Quex Park, in her will of 1707. In it she left Crispe Farm to the Churchwardens & Overseers of the village, who were to become its Trustees. The income from letting the farm was to be used for three main purposes and one smaller one. The first aim was to fund an "able dame or schoolmaster" to teach 12 children (to include both boys and girls). The second purpose she stated was for the funds to apprentice local poor children to masters in the village, so that they could learn to earn a decent living. The third aim was to provide 5 poor widows with money "that they may appear at Divine Service decently apparelled on Christmas Day". The fourth purpose was for a lady (Ellen Window, in the first instance) to keep the monuments in Quex Chapel clean and tidy.

When Anna Crispe died in 1708, the Trust immediately came into operation and Elenor Jarvis became the first Dame of the school at a wage of £6 a year. By 1827 the master of that time Gilbert Stringer received £36 15s a year. With the building of the Park Lane School in 1849, the Crispe Charity School lost its importance and by the early 1862 was closed. The funds were used to help fund the National School in Park Lane. This grant was dropped when a new "School-Church" was built in Plumstone Road in Acol in 1875, housed in St Mildred's Church.

The school element of this venture closed just ten years later, so the Trustees re-ordered their Scheme, so that the main portion of the money went to children in apprenticeships. In the new scheme local youth groups were granted the next largest portion of the funds. The number of widows had been increased to 10 by this time and the grant for the upkeep of Quex Chapel continued as of old. In 1972 the Charity Commissioners re-ordered the scheme once more. By now, apprenticeships were a rare and it was decided that the bulk of the money was to go to youngsters leaving school but continuing their education at college, university or in work-training schemes, between the ages of 16 and 24. There were also to be grants for any type of youth group within the same age band. The only other criteria for the grants was that the youngsters were to reside within the parish of Birchington with Acol.

From the beginning, the needs of the widows of the parish were considered and

With a history like this, in 2008, we can be proud of our local charity which still serves both young and old in the Parish of Birchington with Acol.

Any of our local youth groups, or any youngsters who are starting a new course of education or training, between the ages of 16 and 24 and who live in the parish, can apply for and application form to :-

The Clerk to the Crispe Charity
6 Alpha Road
Birchington CT7 9EQ

The forms need to be returned to the Clerk by October 31st, in time for the annual meeting of the Trustees in mid-November. The grants are sent out on December 1st, which is also the date the 10 widows receive their grants each year.