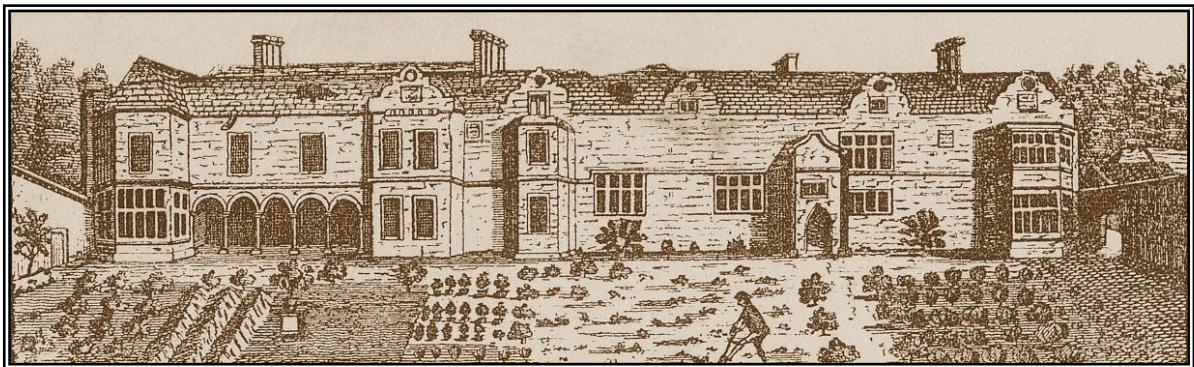


Quex House and the Neames

During the late 1600s and early 1700s two of the Neame family – John & William - were tenants of Quex. Quex had been owned by the Quek family from about 1420. The last Quek heiress married a Crispe in c. 1500, and this family then continued to own it and live there until their male line died out in c. 1670. The last in the family of Crispe owners of Quex were four sisters. Three of them married and went to live at the husbands' country houses, but Anna Crispe, the youngest, was unmarried. She spent most of her time at one or other of her sisters' homes, but still returned to Quex occasionally and is buried in Quex Chapel Vault. In her will, dated 1708, she left Crispe Farm in Acol to Trustees, to provide the revenue for a charity, which is still functioning today.

When Anna died in 1709, the Crispe Charity began running our first school and also provided funds for 5 widows and paid for the care of Quex Chapel in All Saints Church, which still belongs to the owners of Quex House. The school ran until 1869, by which time the National School had been built in Park Lane. The money was then diverted to help youngsters leaving school and now also helps youth groups in the parish of All Saints and Acol. The Widows' money now helps 10 widows each Christmas.

When Anna died in 1709, the house was already being let to 3 farmers – John and William Neame being two of them. At this time, the house was in a very poor state of repair and although it looked grand, it had holes in the roof and broken chimneys. In the drawing of 1788, the front garden looks as if it is being used as an allotment! The Neame families were glad of the chance to earn money from farming the land, but when it came up for sale, the price was probably beyond them, because the Quex estates were vast. In the end Lord Holland bought the lot, then later sold some of it to his assistant, John Powell (Lord Holland was Paymaster General to the Crown). John Powell's descendants, the Powell-Cotton family, still own Quex and have enlarged the holding over the centuries. John Powell's nephew, John Powell Powell, completely rebuilt the old house in 1809.



This was what the house looked like when John and William were working the land. It is not clear whether they actually lived in the house – it was uninhabitable in parts, according to a description of it in c. 1700.