

CHARITY SCHOOL & NATIONAL SCHOOLS of BIRCHINGTON WITH ACOL

by ALFRED T. WALKER - PARISH ARCHIVIST

The first school in Birchington and Acol of which there is a record was the Charity School established under the will of Anna Gertruy Crispe of Quex, who died March 23rd 1708. She bequeathed in her will to the Overseers of the Poor of Birchington and the Ville of Acol, 47 acres of land lying in the parishes of Birchington and Monkton – now known as the Crispe Farm – then let at 18 pounds yearly – the income from which “to keep at school with an able Dame or Schoolmaster the number of twelve boys and girls to be taught and learn to read and to write and the girls to work needlework – to be educated in good manners and to be at Church orderly, and having learned to read, to give each at leaving the School a Bible.” Also it was stated that the remaining money, after the other bequests had been met, “to bind some of the boys as an apprentice at some handicraft trade.”

So was started in 1709 the Crispe Charity School. This school was one of hundreds founded all over England during the reigns of William and Mary, and of Queen Anne. They were much needed, as the State at that time did nothing for the education of the poor, and the ordinary parishes such as Birchington and the Ville of Acol had no sort of endowed school although perhaps a village dame or some other unofficial person taught a few village people their letters in return for small fees.

A copy of the last Will of Mistress Anna Gertruy Crispe dated 13th February 1707 is written in the front of the first volume of the Crispe Charity Land Account Book, where there is also a summary of the terms of the Will. Mistress Anna Gertruy Crispe was the last of the Crispes to live at Quex. She was buried in the vault of the Quex Chapel of the Birchington Parish Church where there is a white marble monument with bust to her, and on this monument is inscribed the portion of her will by which she left the 47 acres of land in trust for poor widows and for education. The monument is by a brilliant sculptor, William Palmer of London.

This Crispe Charity School was one of the first to be established in East Kent. The first “Dame” was Elinor Jarvis who was paid December 31st 1709 the sum of £2 11s 8d. The entry in the Account Book reads,

“paid Elin Jarvis as appears by Recait (receipt) 02 11 08”

On March 25th 1710, i.e. Lady Day, she was paid for teaching 12 scholars £5 1s 10d in four quarterly amounts and 10s 6d was paid for 13 Bibles.

BIRCHINGTON SCHOOLS

Charity Schools – From English Social History by G.M. Trevelyan

Typical units of education in the 18th and 19th centuries were the Charity Schools (the village school) and the great Public School where the classes were educated in rigorous segregation.

During the reigns of William and Anne we owe the Charity Schools.

In reign of Queen Anne, Charity Schools were founded by hundreds all over England, to educate the children of the poor in reading, writing, moral discipline and the principals of the Church of England.

They were much needed, for the State did nothing for the education of the poor, and the ordinary parish had no sort of endowed school once the monasteries had been closed by Henry VIII, though in many villages “dames” and other unofficial persons taught children their letters in return for small fees. By the end of Anne’s reign there were some 20,000 boys and girls, outside of London attending the new Charity Schools.

Essential parts of the scheme were to clothe the children decently while at school and to apprentice them to good trades afterwards. At this time there began a keener sensitiveness to the needs and sufferings of others, particularly the poor – which was reflected in the foundation of Charity Schools, then of hospitals.

The Charity Schools - followed by the Charity School movement that took on such large proportions after 1780 – began the first systematic attempt to give an education to the bulk of the working people, as distinct from selected clever boys to whom the old grammar schools had given opportunity to rise out of their class.

The one great drawback of the Charity Schools was too great an anxiety to keep the young scholars in their 'appointed sphere of life' - and train up a submissive generation. "God bless the Squire and his relations, and keep us in our proper stations," was the sentiment of that time.

Charities, Rent Reports – 1786, 1815 – 1839, & 1868

CRISPE CHARITY SCHOOL

The Crispe Farm was let by auction on lease for eight years, from the 11th October 1813 by the Trustees at the rent of £51-14s for the first year and £150 for every succeeding year of the term. Written comment - "This rent is considerably above the real value and the land is not expected to produce much more than half the present rent when the lease expires. The tenant has applied for an abatement in his rent but none has yet been allowed him."

The Schoolmaster received £36-15s yearly for teaching 12 boys and girls mentioned in the will, and he took 12 more in addition, sometimes one or two more. There were never less than 24.

From the report to Parliament - "They are all taught reading, writing and accounts, and the girls are taught needlework. Each of the first 12 receives a Bible on leaving school. The Overseers of the Poor appoint the first 12 children, but the selection of the other 12 is generally left to the Schoolmaster. The apprentices are taken from the first 12 children, and the funds from the rent are more than sufficient for the boys who offer to go out as apprentices. The apprentices' fees vary from £10 to £25 and even £35 was once given."

In an Appendix – "it is stated in evidence before the Committee on Education of the Poor.

Gilbert Stringer, the Schoolmaster" - "The informant said there was an endowed school at Birchington.

"Said previous to Easter 1817, his salary was £20. He said that at that time it was raised to £36-15s.

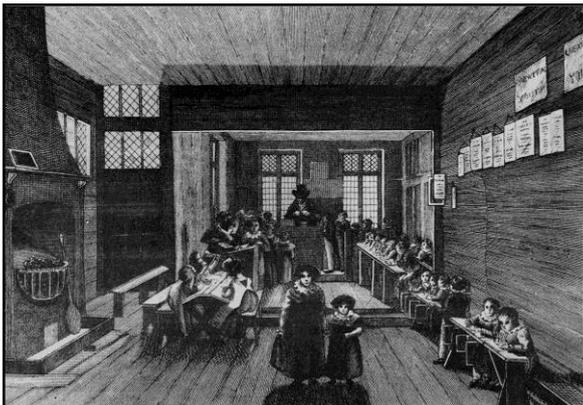
"Said he taught the 12 boys and girls, as well as the 12 taken in addition, reading, writing and arithmetic and there was no allowance for books and stationery – the parents found these themselves."

"I built the schoolroom which belongs to me – there is no house attached to the school, I have to find that myself – the original 12 and the 12 added lately are always filled up and there are always candidates for a vacancy.

"The children attend church regularly, I send the girls to another school to be taught needlework. There are in the Parish of Birchington and Ville of Acole about 180 children, who have not the means of education, about 140 of whom attend regularly at the Sunday School, where reading is taught."



School Barn, Park Rd



BIRCHINGTON SCHOOLS & CHARITY SCHOOLS

The Charity Schools were founded for religious reasons, but they were associated with the more mundane objects of defending the State Church against Dissenters and against Jacobites, and of training up the children of the poor to be industrious and able members of a carefully graded social economy.

Isle of Thanet Gazette – 28th May 1910

Law School at Birchington for Messrs Ransome and Jeston (Grenham House School) the tender of Mr D Dyke of Westgate £3860 accepted.

THE ANSON BYE-LAW

Canterbury Diocesan Notes – September 1933

What is the Anson Bye-law? It is the statutory method by which on at least one day a week Council School children, with the written consent of their parents from the Council Schools, may receive definite Church Teaching, in addition to the excellent Bible instruction given in the Council Schools.

The reason for adopting the Anson Bye-law is that, owing to the re-organisation of the schools of the town, the Church Schools have lost all their senior scholars from the age of 11 upwards, as they now attend Senior Schools and in two schools children from 8 to 11 years of age in addition.

The Anson Bye-law has been in operation in Maidstone in no less than four centres, and the success which has attended this first experiment in our Diocese has been so marked that we are glad to give a brief account of it in the hope that it may be adopted elsewhere. The new arrangement has now been in force for over a year and is found to be working perfectly smoothly and without any difficulty whatever. This is due to the earnest co-operation of both the Local Education Authority and the Teachers with the Clergy of the Town. Through it the Clergy are brought into personal contact with children whom otherwise they would not be able to influence, and thus happy relations are established with them, which makes the extra trouble in running these classes well worthwhile.

In order to gain an idea of what exactly takes place, perhaps it is best to take one of these classes for an example and describe what it done. The children assemble outside the Church and at 8.55 they are admitted, each child having its own particular place in the north aisle of the church. Everything is in readiness. The hymns are on the board and the questions relating to the lesson (usually five or six in number) are there also. No children are allowed to come in late, so that the same strict punctuality is observed as in a day school. At nine o'clock exactly, the hymn begins, followed by a prayer repeated after the Vicar, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. Then comes the marking of the attendance register and this is done by the children themselves, as at the end of each pew there is a card containing the names of the children in that pew in the order in which they sit; these cards are gathered up and the registers are marked by an assistant during the progress of the lesson. Each child has a notebook and pencil, and as the lesson is taught, pauses are made during which the questions are answered. After the close of the lesson a second hymn and the "Grace" follow and the children are then taken back to the Day School.

In the particular parish referred to there are two classes, one for junior mixed children (8 -11 years) on Tuesdays and a second for senior girls (11 to 14 years) on Thursdays, and seeing that the numbers on the register during this year are 93 and 80 respectively, the Vicar has been brought into personal contact with no less than 173 children, a far larger number than if he had taken a single class in the Church Day Schools. In addition provision is made for the senior boys to attend the class held at the mother church.

NOTES ON BIRCHINGTON C. of E. SCHOOL

"19th August 1845 – John Powell Esquire, of Quex Park freely and voluntarily and without any valuable consideration, conveyed to the Rev. Richard Peter Whish, Vicar of the several parishes of Monkton, Birchington and Acol a parcel of land in what is now known as Park Lane (it was a parcel of the land formerly attached to Birchington Workhouse which was purchased in 1837 by John Powell Powell from the Visitor and Guardians of Birchington Union Workhouse).

"The land to be used by the Vicar and his successors as a Site for a school for poor persons of and in the several parishes of Birchington and Acol, and as a residence of the

Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress – such school to be always in union with the Incorporated National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the established church, conducted according to its principles and for the furtherance of its ends and designs and to be in all things under the management and control of the said Richard Peter Whish or other Vicar for the time being of the parishes of Birchington and Acol. John Powell Powell hereby declares and directs that the Vicar for the time being shall alone have the power to select and appoint the master and mistress.”

1874 – The Charity Commission established a scheme for the future regulation of the Charity – The National School founded by Deed dated 19th August 1845.

“The School and other buildings standing on the land vested in and held by the Vicar and Churchwardens of the Parish of Birchington and their successors on trust, to be for ever appropriated and used solely as and for a school.

“Such school shall always be in union with and conducted according to the principles and in furtherance of the ends and designs of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the principles of the established Church.

“The principal officiating minister for the time being shall have the superintendence of the religious and moral instruction of all children attending the school and may also use or direct the premises to be used for the purposes of a Sunday School under his exclusive control.”

The next paragraph is about the management of the school – Vicar, Churchwardens etc and must be members of C of E. “The master or mistress must be a member of the Church of England. The principal officiating minister of the Parish shall be Chairman.”

1876 – A Deed of Grant and Exchange was drawn up – part of the Cotton Estates exchanged for a small piece of Birchington School Land – and conveyed to the Vicar and Churchwardens (to enable an addition to be built onto the side of the building.)

1901 – Indenture and Grant of Land.

Land was conveyed voluntarily by Percy H. G. Powell Cotton to the Vicar and Churchwardens as a school site – on same conditions as in the Trust Deed of the Charity Commission. On the land are erected the buildings at the rear which were originally the girls and infants’ schools.

1939 – A plot of land was conveyed from Major P. H. G. Powell Cotton to the Vicar and Churchwardens for an air raid shelter trench. This site is now used by the new classroom building – the Bristol Hut. The purchasers paid £15-12-6.

The vendor has the right to repurchase the said land for £15-12-6 when the land is not required by the purchasers (for the construction of air raid trench-shelters). The land must not be used for any other purpose without license of the vendor.

NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS - LAW AND TENURE DEPARTMENT

“Dear Mr. Walker,

“Thank you for your letter of the 4th February.

“As a general comment, and as background to the short answers given in this letter to your questions, I think you should obtain a copy of “County and Voluntary Schools (Third Edition)” by Alexander and Barraclough. This can be obtained on loan from the N.U.T. Library on application by you.

“I now set out your specific questions, together with my answers.

1. What denominational teaching can take place in a Controlled School?

The Foundation Managers can arrange for this on not more than two periods in each week.

2. What teachers can be asked to take this teaching?
The reserved teachers can be required to give denominational instruction. The Head can do so, as a volunteer if he or she so wishes.
3. Can the Vicar (or his Curate) go into the School to take any such teaching? Have they a legal right?
This can legally be done if arranged by the Foundation Managers within the limits laid down in answer (1).
4. Must the Head of a Controlled C. of E. School be C. of E?
The appointment of Head lies with the L.E.A., and he or she need not be Church of England unless the Trust Deed of the School so requires.
5. What say do the parents have in this matter of denominational teaching? Must they "opt in" or "opt out"?
It is only when the parents ask for denominational teaching that it can be given at all.
6. "Who appoints the Managers and the Chairman of a Controlled C. of E. School?
The Instrument of Management providing for the constitution of the Managing Body is made by an order of the Secretary of State. The minimum number is six and they are appointed as follows:-
 - 2 Foundation Managers
 - 2 L.E.A. Managers
 - 2 Minor Authority Managers
The Chairman will normally be elected by the Managers.
7. Is the Church expected to pay anything towards the maintaining of the School, if it is designated a Controlled School?
No, except in respect of lettings out of school hours.
8. Most of these C. of E. Schools have Trust Deeds vesting the buildings etc. in the Vicar and Churchwardens to maintain C. of E. teaching. How does becoming Controlled affect the Trust Deed?

The Trust Deed remains in force unless modified by the Secretary of State. If any provisions in the Instrument of Management or Rules of Management are inconsistent with the Trust Deed, modifications of the latter can be made.

Yours faithfully.

K. Wormald."

A FEW NOTES ON CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

1. The book "County and Voluntary Schools" by Alexander & Barraclough 3rd Edition is useful.
2. The Foundation Managers can arrange for denominational teaching in a controlled school, on not more than two periods in each week.
3. "Reserved" teachers can be required to give this denominational teaching.
The Head can do so if he, or she, so wishes.
4. The Vicar or his Curate can go into the School to take any such teaching.
This can legally be done if arranged by the Foundation Managers within the limits laid down in 2.

5. The appointment of the Head lies with the L.E.A. and he or she, need not be C. of E. unless the Trust Deed of the School so requires.
6. Parents can “opt in” or “opt out” of this denominational teaching. It is only when the parents ask for denominational teaching that it can be given at all.
7. The Managers and Chairman of a C. of E. Controlled School are constituted by the Instrument of Management providing for the constitution of the Managing Body – and is made by an order of the Secretary of State.
The minimum number is six and they are appointed as follows:-
 - 2 Foundation Managers.
 - 2 L.E.A. Managers.
 - 2 Minor Authority Managers.The Chairman will normally be elected by the Managers.
8. The Church is not expected to pay anything towards the maintaining of the School if controlled, except in respect of lettings out of school hours.
9. Most D. of E. Schools have Trust Deeds vesting the buildings etc. in the Vicar and Churchwardens to maintain C. of E. teaching.



This photo was taken c. 1950 of the original National School, which was built in 1849.
The Master's house is attached to the right of the school room.