

## THE QUEX CHAPEL – 1966

By Alfred Walker

The Quex chapel was originally built by the Parker Family, who lived in what we now know as Quex Park. They had owned land in the Isle of Thanet from about 1200

Now all the Monuments in the Chapel have been expertly cleaned and restored, the shields re-emblazoned, and the lettering on the monuments repainted. As a result the Chapel now looks really lovely and colourful and is greatly admired by all, especially our visitors.

It was during the cleaning of the Ionic column monument to Sir Nicholas Crispe and others, that a most interesting re-discovery was made. Behind this monument at the top is the arch of an Early English window, 3 feet 6 inches across. The window, with the exception of the arch had been filled in many years ago. No sign of this window can be seen from the outside nowadays, though it is clearly visible in a drawing of the church dated 1815.. There were two such windows in the north wall of the Chapel when it was originally built early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

What makes this discovery so interesting is that on the arch of this window can still be seen the remains of a medieval wall painting, the head with a halo of what is probably a saint. The colours, though faded, are clearly made from different tones of clay and of chalk.

It is almost certainly a medieval wall painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as this Chapel was dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, and before the Reformation was known as the Lady Chapel. Before about 1550 there were images, an Altar and Lights (candles) maintained to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a number of our ancient parishioners left money and corn in their wills for the maintenance of the 'Lights of St. Mary'.



**Richard Quek, d. 1459**

Richard Quek who died in 1459 and whose memorial brass is on the north wall next to the stone altar tomb, willed to be buried in the "Chancel of the Blessed Mary of Birchenton." Hammond de Westgate in 1402 left 4 bushels of corn to the "Lights of the Blessed Virgin Mary". The Altar to the Virgin Mary was taken down in 1550 at the time of the Reformation as stated in our Churchwardens Accounts Book –

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John Quek who died in 1449, the father of Richard Quek, left 10 marcs (£6 13s 4d) in his will “for the making of a window of glass in the chancel of St. Mary” of Birchington.

I wonder if the window behind the Ionic column monument is the window erected with the money left by John Quek over 500 years ago. His memorial brass, showing him in the civilian dress of the period, with an analace or large hunting knife hanging from his girdle, with his son Richard by his side, is the second brass from the stone altar tomb.

This small portion of wall painting is all that is left of the medieval wall paintings that once covered the walls of most of our Church.

Again we are very grateful to Mr. Christopher Powell Cotton for all the restoration he has had carried out in the Quex Chapel.

Next month, for those interested in Heraldry, an article will appear describing the shields emblazoned on the monuments.



## FINANCE

The suggestion was made at a recent meeting of the Parochial Church Council that the time might be opportune to again remind you of the advantage to the Church of payments under Deed of Covenant and I agreed to write an item for the Magazine. While doing so, it would perhaps be best to remind you all of the various means of giving and of the need for them.

It may surprise you to find that the everyday cost of maintaining the Church in Birchington over a year comes to over £5,000, without allowing for any special or capital expenditure. The following brief statement shows how this is made up, and where the money comes from to pay for it all.

<b>RECEIPTS</b>		<b>PAYMENTS</b>	
	£		£
Ordinary Collection	1,608	Clergy	1,938
Special Objects	422	Diocesan Quota	560
Freewill Offerings	505	Special Objects	620
Collecting Boxes	81	Verger	236
Deeds of Covenant (inc taxes)	649	Clergy Houses	446
Curate Grant	510	Churches and	
		Churchyards	966
Fetes	841	Miscellaneous	634
Fees	278		
Miscellaneous	506		
	5,400		5,400

Most of you will have heard this several times, but I feel I must again repeat it. When the land at Minnis Road was sold, none of the money realised came into the hands of the PCC. Every penny had to be invested, and although the interest is considerable, amounting to something like £1,700 a year, this can only be spent on the fabric of or the beautification of the Parish Church. This

may at first seem unreasonable but there is wisdom in it. Even such a large sum as £27,000 could very soon be spent and once it was gone, that would be that. As it is, we are assured of a certain income every year, and there will be no difficulty in utilising it in the best possible manner for some time yet.

After a lapse of over 400 years the Quex chapel is again in use for Services. It was about the year 1550 when the Chapel was last used for services and the Altar pulled down. On Wednesday morning, May 11<sup>th</sup>, Holy Communion was again celebrated in the Chapel.

The chapel has been rearranged and refurnished through the great generosity of Christopher Powell Cotton Esq., in memory of his parents, and on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> May, at Matins, the Altar was consecrated and the Altar ornaments dedicated by the Lord Bishop of Dover.

A plaque stating that the Chapel "was refurnished and the Altar dedicated to the glory of God and in memory of P.H.G. Powell Cotton and H.B. Powell Cotton" is on the wall of the Chapel.

The Altar stands in front of the Robert Adams fireplace memorial to the Powell Cottons, and is of Dove-bardiglio marble from Italy standing on blue wood kirk sandstone piers.

The five consecration crosses on the Altar and also the plaque were carved by Mr Peter Jezzard, our Organist, and the long pews which were facing the Chancel were removed, cut, cleaned, reshaped, and returned by Mr H. Luck, the Secretary to our Bell ringers, whose craftsmanship has been very much admired. The Bishop in his sermon commented very favourably on the pews. New lighting has been installed.

With the lovely silver Altar ornaments and the red carpeting the Chapel is now a lovely place in which to hold Services, especially that of Holy Communion.

The Vicar and the Churchwardens have signed an agreement with Mr Powell Cotton on the alterations, a copy of which is in the Church safe. There is no change in the legal status of the Chapel, the Chapel is still freehold property of the owners of Quex Park, but it will be available for use as the Vicar may consider desirable on all weekdays. On Sundays the Chapel will continue to be used normally as Quex sittings in the Church.

The St. Margaret's Chapel will continue to be used as a Chapel but mainly for private prayer and meditation.

The Quex Chapel, the Crispe Chapel or Chantry, Our Lady Chapel, or the St. Mary's chapel, as it has been known through the ages, forms, with the Chancel and the St. Margaret's Chapel the oldest part of the Church and was probably built early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the time of Henry III. It is quite possible that the owners of Quex, or the Parkers, as it was then called, were responsible for the building of this early Church of three chapels with a squat tower.

The Chapel on the north side, the Quex or Crispe Chapel, was dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, and originally this was the Lady Chapel. In this Lady Chapel, up to the time of the Reformation, was an Altar dedicated to Our Lady with Images and Lights in her Honour.

In 1402 Hammond de Westgate left 4 bushels of corn to the Light of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in 1414 Thomas Walter of Birchington left 1 bushel.

From the earliest times the owners of Quex and their relatives have been buried in the vaults beneath the Chapel, as the Wills in Canterbury and the monuments show.

The Chapel contains some remarkable and interesting monuments. Here are memorials in brass, stone, alabaster, and marble, commemorating the owners of Quex from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

The earliest monumental brass in the Chapel is of John Queke who died in 1449 and his brass has his son Richard by his side. In the vaults below rest many of the Quex, Crispe, Powell, and Cotton families, as well as many others. The vaults are now filled in and it is not likely that any further burials will take place.

The Altar tomb with the recumbent stone figures is of the great Sir Henry Crispe who died in 1575, and his wife Lady Catherine Scott of Smeeth, who died in 1544. The unique mural monument with six busts by the celebrated sculptor, Joshua Marshall, Master Mason to King Charles II, is to John Crispe and his son, Sir Henry, each with their two wives. The splendid alabaster monument with the kneeling figures is to "Bonjour" Crispe and his wife, the Lady Marie Colepeper. There is a mural monument by a brilliant sculptor, William Palmer, to Anna Gertruy Crispe, the founder of the Crispe Charity, and a marble monument in the classical style with fluted Ionic Pillars and pilasters commemorating the Crispes and the Powells, as well as ledger stones with heraldic achievements.

From the earliest times the Quex Chapel has been a private chapel belonging to the owners of Quex Park.

The following extracts are taken from our Churchwardens Account Books and Burial Register –

1577, Itm. Paid for the window mendinge in Mr Crispes chancel XIId  
1747, (Burial) Oct 23 Henry Crispe Esqr in ye Chancell belonging to Quex

When the Quex estate was sold in 1700 it included "all that the Isle and Building adjoining to the North side of the Parish Church of Birchington aforesaid belonging or appertaining to the said Mansion House of Quex", which is the Quex Chapel.

It was said that the small lancet window high up in the west wall of the Chapel originally lit the priest's room which occupied the upper portion of the Chapel. This room was used by the priest probably when he came from Monkton, as Birchington was a chapelry of Monkton until 1871. Access to this room was supposed to have been gained by a small wooden staircase. It is now known that this was never the case. One of the earliest entries in our Churchwardens Book dated 1532 is for "bordes, nales, hokys, & on(e) stapell Xd" for "on(e) windowe to Fr Thomas Cha(m)byr". Father Thomas Norman was curate at Birchington at this time. His 'Room' was almost certainly a room rented for his use in one of the villager's houses. He later had a whole house.

There have been several changes in the Chapel through the ages. At the Reformation the Altar was taken down as the following entry in our Churchwardens Book shows ...

"1550 Itm. Payd for taking down of or (our) lady aultr (altar) VIIIId", since when the Chapel has not been used for services.

Later on, when box pews were installed in the church, the Quex owners had a raised pew - somewhat like an "opera" box - in the Chapel which blocked the whole of the first arch between the Chapel and the

Chancel. It was approached by curved steps from the north aisle which covered the entrance to the Quex vault. Beside the steps was a box pew for the Quex servants.

In 1863, at the 'restoration' of the Church, this raised pew was taken down, and the long seats facing the Chancel were installed. The screen between the Chapel and the Nave was erected in memory of Henry Horace Powell Cotton who died in 1894, and was buried at Quex. The figures in coloured glass represent Faith, Charity, Hope, Fortitude, Humility, Justice.

There has now been another restoration, a real one, and now we have the privilege of worshipping, on weekdays, in this lovely Chapel. We are very grateful to Mr Christopher Powell Cotton and to the family for what has been done.