

# QUEX AND ITS OWNERS

By Alfred T Walker - 1969

## QUEX - ITS SITUATION

Quek, Quekes, Queakes, Queeks, Queekes, Quecks or Quex was the seat of an ancient family which bore that name some seven centuries ago, in the Isle of Thanet, within the Manor of Monkton, and in the Parishes of the Vill of Wood, or Acol, and of Birchington.

## THE NAME

The name Quekes is quite interesting. It was another name for the ancient game of chequers which was played with pebbles or marbles upon a board, which was divided into 64 squares, alternately black and white. The armorial bearings of the Quekes was ermine, a fess chequy of argent and sable, or in other words, a white shield marked with black spots with a band of silver and black squares across the middle of the escutcheon.

## THE ARMORIAL BEARINGS

These armorial bearings of the Quek family can be seen in the Quex Chapel of Birchington Church and they occupy the place of honour in the Crispe armorial bearings.

## THE PARKERS

The Quek family were not the first owners of this estate. Before the Quek family were the Parkers. We know little about this family but their residence called "Parker" is shown on Thomas of Elmham's map of the Isle of Thanet which was drawn about A.D. 1414, and is found in his History of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury. Thomas of Elmham was a monk and treasurer of the Abbey. The original of the map is now in a manuscript belonging to Trinity College, Cambridge. The house marked "Parker" is shown on the map not far from "Berchigtone", and near a windmill and a beacon. This house was gradually enlarged over the years by each successive occupant of the estate. It is no longer in existence, but its position is thought to have been almost identical with the present mansion.

The family of Parker must have been of some importance in Thanet as they bequeathed money to the Church of Birchington and also to the Church of St. Nicholas-at-Wode or Woodchurch. Their house is the only secular property shown on the whole island – again an indication of its importance at that date.

John Parker **1** in his will of 1412 willed to be buried in the Church of All Saints, Birchington, and bequeathed £6 to the fabric of the Church and also 10s to the fabric of the Church at Wode.

Cecilia Parker his wife of the Parish of Birchington bequeathed in 1428, 6s 8d to the Church of Birchington and 6s 8d to the altar. She also bequeathed 40d to the Light of the Blessed Mary in the Church of Wode, and 40d to the Light of the Torches of Wode. **1**

In 1426/7 **2** £15-6-8 was received from the widow of John Parker for one window made in the chapel of Byrchinton by the receivers of the money for the new work of Christ Church, Canterbury.

## THE QUEK FAMILY

The Parkers were succeeded by the Queks who first appear as occupiers or owners of land in the Isle of Thanet in 1334/5 (EdIII). In that year Tho. Queyk paid 1s. 0d and Wm. Queyk 2s. 10¼d for the fifteenth and tenth, **3** a tax on property. As there is no record of the transfer of the property to a Quek owner, it would appear that John Quek married the Cecilia either the widow or heiress of the Parkers thus obtaining possession of the estate. There is in Canterbury Cathedral Library an indenture dated 1420 (Kent) witnessing that the trustees of John Parker after the death of Cecilia his widow, proposed among other things to give 100 marks for the repair of the Kings highway called Park Strete and to give John Queke 56s. 8d. **4** From other documents in Christ Church Canterbury we know that the Quek family, John, Thomas, Richard, Joan, Christiana, and Laurence, all held land in Thanet, mainly in Monkton, from the early 1300s to towards the latter half of the 1400s. **5**

## JOHN QUEK

The earliest monument to a Quek in Birchington Church is that to John Quek who died in 1449, and was buried in the Quex Chapel where his brass can now be seen showing him in the civilian dress of the period, with an analace or large hunting knife hanging from his girdle, and with his son Richard as a miniature by his side. This John married Juliana, third daughter of John Baker **6** of Coldham in the Parish of Capel-le-Ferne. It is said that John later married the heiress of the Parkers thus obtaining possession of the property. He probably enlarged the old manor house of Quex which stood until 1806, when it was pulled down and replaced by the present mansion.

In 1436 this John Queke was commissioned to levy and collect the tenth and fifteenth sesses. **7** He was, comparatively, a larger taxpayer in the Ringslo Hundred (Ringslo - coterminous with the Isle of Thanet). Upon a subsidy roll of a fifteenth and a tenth collected in 1418, he appears entered as paying 6s. 8d, Joan Quyek is charged 6d, Thomas Queyk 4d, and Christiana Queyk 4d. **8** In his will he bequeathed the sum of 10 marks to erect a glass window in the Chancel of St. Mary, Birchington, now the Quex Chapel but it was left to the executors of his son Richard's will to fulfil his father's wishes.

## RICHARD QUEK

John Quek was succeeded by his son Richard, but he occupied the estate for only 10 years. His brass in the Quex Chapel is a fine one showing him in the civilian dress of the period. The inscription under is now missing but Lewis in his History of Thanet, 1723, when the brass was on the floor with its inscription; "Hic jacet Ricus Quek qui obit XVIII die mentis marcij An Dni MCCCCLIX." (Here lies Richard Quek who died 18<sup>th</sup> day of March AD 1459)

Richard was a generous benefactor to the Church and in his will dated 1458 **9** willed to be buried in the Chancel of St. Mary, Birchington, and bequeathed 12d to the high altar, 4 bushels of barley to the Lights of the Body of Christ, and Holy Trinity, and 3s 4d to the fabric of the Church of Wodechurch. Richard possibly had a brother, Laurence Queke of

Birchington, who in 1476 willed 10 to be buried in the Churchyard of All Saints, Birchington (not, not in the Church itself). He bequeathed 12d to the high altar there and two bushels of barley to every light.

## JOHN QUEK

Richard Quek was possibly succeeded by a second John Quek but very little is known of him. Hasted in his History of Kent states that a John Quek Esq., of Quekes bought Grimgill Manor in the Parish of Whitstable in 1483 or soon after and his sole daughter and heiress carried this Manor in marriage to the Crispes with whom it remained until 1605, when it was sold.

## JOHN CRISPE AND AGNES QUEK

It is thought that John Quek (2) had a daughter and heiress named Agnes, who married John Crispe (the Elder), and as a result of this marriage the estate passed to the family named Crispe and remained with the Crispes until 1700. Owing to our lack of information, it is very difficult to trace the descent of the Crispes at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially as there were Crispes in Thanet, Canterbury, Whitstable, and in places outside of Kent, several of whom were named John.

Hasted, Lewis and the Heralds all agree that this John Crispe descended from the Crispes of Stanlake in Oxfordshire. He may have been the son of Henry Crispe who married Jane, daughter of Nicholas Dyer of Rotherfield.

Barrett in his *'History of the Ville of Birchington'* disagrees with both Lewis and Hasted over this John Crispe and the date of his death. Lewis and Hasted both give 1500 as the date but Barrett produces some evidence to suggest that he lived until about 1536. There is a memorial brass to John Crispe and Agnes his wife in the Quex Chapel but the effigies of both the adults have disappeared, and the inscription remaining is not complete. From this we learn that Agnes Crispe who was possibly Agnes Quek, died in 1536 but no date is given for the decease of John - it is left blank as none of his children bothered to complete their father's memorial. On the brass are 8 sons and 7 daughters – all children of John and Agnes.

This John Crispe may have been the John Crispe of Canterbury and Thanet whose will dated 1500 / 01 is recorded in the Canterbury Consistory Court, Vol 8. and witnessed by William Crispe and others. He willed to be buried next to his wife at the Monastery of St. Augustine. He bequeathed 3s 4d to the vicar of Monkton for tithes forgotten and 6 bushels of barley to every light in the Church of Birchington, also 66s 8d to making of a rood loft at Birchington if the Parishioners there will one new made. To church works of Whitstable he bequeathed 40s, and 20s to 'the making of a foul way' between Canterbury and Whitstable. This will rather points to the fact that this is the John Crispe who married Agnes Quek as Agnes inherited the Manor of Grimgill in the Parish of Whitstable. This John also had a house in Canterbury. One of the John Crispes was also Mayor of Canterbury in 1489/90.

The Crispe coat of arms is *or on a chevron sable, five horse-shoes argent* – in other words five silver horseshoes on a black chevron on a gold shield. These armorial bearings, with those of the Quek family occupying the

place of honour, can be seen in the Quex Chapel of Birchington. The Crispe coat of arms can also be seen in St. John's Church, Margate.

## **JOHN CRISPE THE YOUNGER**

It appears that the estate passed to John Crispe the younger - son and heir of John Crispe and Agnes Quek. He is sometimes described as of Cleve. Perhaps Cleve (or 'Cleve Court') was originally the chief possession brought by Agnes Quek to her husband on her marriage to John Crispe. Hasted states that Cleve was formally in the possession of the family of Queks. At Cleve the eldest branch of the Quek-Crispe descendents remained seated for three or four more generations. John Crispe the Younger's eldest son, also John, is likewise described as 'of Cleave' while Quex in Birchington seems to have been the residence of his second son, Henry, who made it a place of greater importance than it had ever been before. It may have been that in very early years Quex was an appendage of Cleve. This John Crispe the younger married, so it appears from the memorial brasses in the Quex Chapel, three times.

His first wife was Avice or Alys, daughter of Thomas Denne of Kingstone and who died in 1518 and by whom he had issue John Crispe of Cleve his heir, Sir Henry Crispe of Quek, and William Crispe, Lieutenant Governor of Dover Castle, and some daughters.

His second wife was Margaret, daughter of George Rotherham and who died in 1528 and his third wife was Margaret who died in 1533 after the birth and death of her "chrysome" child.

## **THE CHRYSOMED CHILD**

The baby is represented below Margaret's brass in its baptismal robe but unfortunately the head is missing. A chrysom was a square of white linen used for covering the child at its baptism, as an emblem of purity. A child dying before it was a month old was buried in its chrysom, and a child thus buried was called a chrysome child. Such representations are quite common

## **JOHN CRISPE THE YOUNGER – (cont.)**

John Crispe was sheriff of Kent in 1518 and his name occurs among those in the Commission for the Peace for Kent in 1517, 1524, 1526 and 1528. 11

In 1536 his name is included among those of the Kentish Gentry to supply soldiers to fight against the Northern rebels, when the people of the North rose in rebellion as a result of the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII, and when Kent raised 1600 men. 12 During this rebellion, known as the Pilgrimage of grace, John Crispe was to abide in Kent to deep good order.

He was at Quek when the Churchwardens of Birchington commenced their Account Books in 1531. These accounts, some of the earliest in Kent, begin with a complete description of all the Birchington Church Lands made in 1527. The survey starts thus, "Itm Imprimus the reknyng of the church lands of Berchynton the xviii yere of Kyng Henry viii and the viiith day of May by John Crispe esquire, Robert Phylipp, Thomas Pettet - - - -"

His issue was 2 daughters and 3 sons. His sons were:-

1. John Crispe of Cleve – his heir, who married Ann, daughter of Robert Quek and who was buried in Monkton Church in 1558 and whose will is registered in the Consistory Court of Canterbury.
2. William Crispe who became Lieutenant Governor of Dover Castle and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary. He married first, Mary, daughter of Avery Randolph of Baddlesmere and by her had several children. His second wife was Ann, daughter of John Brent.
3. Henry Crispe who succeeded to Quek.

### **SIR HENRY CRISPE OR REGULUS INSULAE**

Sir Henry Crispe was the most famous of all the Crispes and raised the name of Crispe to the highest pinnacle of fame and became known as the 'King of the Island'. Hasted says he was, "a man of great name and eminence and of singular estimation for his discretion and weight in the management of the public affairs of the County, as well as for his hospitality insomuch that he was reputed to have the entire rule of all this island."

He was the rich man of the family but how he attained his wealth we know not, but he was the wealthy man although he was only the second son. He married, first, Katherine Scott, a member of the great Kentish family of Scott of Scott's Hall, Smeeth, near Ashford. She died in 1544 as recorded in the Birchington Burial Register. The following year, in 1545, he married in Birchington Church, Ann Haselhurst, daughter and co-heiress of George Haselhurst when Henry Crispe is described in the marriage register as "armiger", showing that he had taken up knighthood.

Sir Henry Crispe is first heard of in 1539 when he was Churchwarden of Birchington and in his Churchwarden's Accounts for that year is recorded the purchase for XXs of the first Bible for Birchington Church, probably that ascribed to Thomas Matthew revised and re-issued in 1539 as the "Great Bible", which Cromwell ordered to be placed in every Church. He was Churchwarden also in 1540, 1541 and 1557.

Sir Henry was living in Birchington during the Reformation period, and saw the changes which took place at that time. During the reign of Edward VI he was appointed one of the 'Church Goods Commissioners' who collected inventories of the Church ornaments and furniture within the various Hundreds (or districts) of Kent and which were sworn before them by the Churchwardens. **13** At the beginning of the Birchington Churchwardens' Book is entered a list of Church goods. It has no date attached to it but it is probably the inventory made in 1552 when Sir Henry was one of the Commissioners. In 1557 when he was Churchwarden with Richard Crispe, his nephew; there is an entry in the book of £30 -16 - 4 spent at 'divers times' for materials and labour for the Church which he gave, taking only 24lb of wax in return, wax for candles which were no longer used on all the many alters (now demolished).

In 1547/8 he was appointed, with others, under an Act of Edward VI to inquire into Chantry and Obit foundations (set up to say masses for the souls of the dead) and to convert the lands of such foundations as came within the scope of the Act to "good and goodlie uses", which really meant providing money for the King's needs. **14** (For some reason his own Quex Chapel was not closed and converted!)

Somner, in his *History of Canterbury* states that Henry Crispe bought a large quantity of bell metal which came from the cathedral but no further trace of it is found. In 1542 he contributed £20-13-4 to a loan to Henry VIII, a large sum in those days, and for the XVth and the Xth taxes he paid 30s, the highest in Birchington. **15**

From letters sent and received from Her Majesty's (Queen Mary 1) Council there is no doubt that he was an Important person in the Isle of Thanet and Kent. In 1558 he had charge of the sea coasts of Thanet and as far as Sandwich and Dover.

The Birchington Baptisms Register, commencing in 1538 contains the entries of the baptisms of three of his children, Anna 1547, John 1557, Janna 1552, but not of Nicholas who is supposed to be the eldest son, and not of Henry. Sir Henry died in 1575 and was buried in the altar tomb in the Quex Chapel of Birchington Church beside his first wife Katherine Scott. His burial is entered in the Burial Register. This tomb has the recumbent stone figures, Henry in armour with sword on the right side, and Katherine in clothes of the period. There is no inscription, but the coats of arms of Crispe and Scott are on the side – the three Catherine wheels for Scott.

## THE QUEX MANSION

The house at this time was quite an imposing building. A view taken in 1781 and published in the Gentleman's Magazine of November 1809, with an account of the Crispe's taken from the 45<sup>th</sup> number of the "Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica", shows the type of house it was. The building was mainly of brick except two large windows which were of stone. The roof was tiled. It had some fine suites of apartments and at least one room was used as a bed chamber for Royalty.

Sir Henry Crispe would have added to the building. In the present mansion in the billiard room is a chimney piece of Kentish rag-stone elaborately carved with the arms of the Crispe's and the Tudor rose. This chimney piece came from the old mansion.

## JOHN CRISPE OF QUEKES

Sir Henry Crispe was succeeded by his second son John, of Quekes, Birchington and who was baptized in 1551 according to the register of Baptisms. Sir Henry's eldest son, Nicholas, by Katherine Scott lived at Grimgell, Whitstable, where he died before his father in 1564 and was buried in Whitstable Church. His burial is entered in the Burial Register of Whitstable as "Sonne and heir to Sir Henry Crispe, Knight." Sir Nicholas was Lord Lieutenant of Kent in 1560 and was Sheriff. In his will registered in the Consistory Court of Canterbury he asked to be buried in the Parish Church of Whitstable and he referred to the property in Whitstable as belonging to his father, Sir Henry. Sir Henry died possessed of it.

Nicholas married his first wife Frances Cheney of Shurland in Sheppey and in the church of Minster, Sheppey is a shield on Sir Thomas Cheney's monument bearing the arms of Crispe, impaling those of Cheney. **16**

To return to John Crispe of Queks, at the age of 22, in 1573 he married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Harlackenden Esquire. She died a month later in 1573. Both marriage and burial are recorded in the Birchington Registers. A year later in 1574 he married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Roper of Eltham.

This marriage also took place in Birchington and is entered in the Register. By Elizabeth he had one son Henry who later, on the death of his father became heir to his grandfather, the great Sir Henry.

In the Churchwarden's Account Book for 1576 is recorded; "Itm of Mr John Crispe for the vestments he bought xxxs." It seems that by this time the Reformation was well established in Birchington and vestments disappeared. John's will was proved in the Consistory Court of Canterbury, in 1583.<sup>17</sup> He asked to be buried in the North Chancel of the Church of Birchington between (Quex Chapel) his father and his late wife (Elz Roper.) John was only 32 when he died in 1583. His monument is on that remarkable work of art in the Quex Chapel of Birchington, the 'Six Busts' monument. On this monument are busts of John Crispe and his two wives, one on either side.

## THE SECOND SIR HENRY CRISPE

John Crispe was succeeded by his young son, Henry, who was only 7 years old when his father died in 1583. His baptism is entered in the register of Baptisms in 1575/6 with the names of his God-parents, his two uncles, William Crispe, Lieutenant of Dover Castle, and Edward Roper, and his aunt Dame Anna Crispe, who married a Mr Philip Browne. It appears that this aunt became Henry's guardian and she and her husband, Philip Browne took up residence at Quex where they remained for many years until nearly the close of the century.

Mr Philip Browne paid the contribution of 12s to the Armada sess levied in 1588 to raise money for the Dover ship to be fitted out to fight against the Spanish Armada.<sup>18</sup> On this occasion Birchington again nobly did its duty. The sess was fixed to raise £6-7-9. Birchington raised £7-12-6. The sess is preserved in the Birchington Church Archives (though now held in Canterbury Cathedral archives).

Both Dame Anne Crispe or Brown and her husband Philip Brown were presented by the Churchwardens at the Visitation of the Archdeacon of Canterbury. In 1590 Ann Brown, gentlewoman was presented "for that she did openly and in the face of the whole congregation on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of August last past, presumptuously usurped and take upon her the office and duty of our Minister as the child of one John Hilh (?) of our said Parish was thought to be baptised in the signing it with the sign of the cross, contrary to the laws of this realm." Her husband Philip Brown was presented with others for not receiving Holy Communion.<sup>19</sup>

This Sir Henry married three times but only the death of his third wife is recorded in the Register of Burials.

His first wife was Marie, daughter of Sir Edward Monins of Waldershare near Dover. She died in 1606. His second wife was Ann, the daughter of Thomas Nevinson of Eastry. She died in 1629. His third wife was Francesca who died in 1646. Sir Henry does not appear to have had children to succeed him.

As a result of trouble between Sir Henry and his second wife Ann Nevinson and her relatives, Sir Henry nearly lost all his estate, and it was only by an Act of Parliament passed in 1610, in the reign of James I, especially for his benefit that he recovered his lands.

Barrett in his '*History of Birchington*' tells the story as told in the Act of Parliament (James I Cap vii) entitled "An Act to make void all unlawful

contracts entered into by Sir Henry Crispe with his wife's relative's fraudulently obtained which threatened to ruin the ancient estate of Quex."

In 1608-9 Sir Henry was one of the Commissioners for the Passage of Birchington. He was also Captain of 200 footmen of the forces raised in Kent but it appears from a letter he wrote in 1627 that he was not a very popular Captain.<sup>20</sup>

In 1635 and 1636 he was Deputy Lord Warden of Dover Castle to the East of Suffolk, then Lord Warden. It was during his time in 1604 that the Parishes of Birchington and Wode or Acol were united. The order provided that each Parish, Birchington and Woodchurch, should appoint one Church Warden 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. In all these early assessments Sir Henry Crispe's name appears noted for his lands and for his revenues – both in Birchington and in Acol.

In 1602 Henry Crispe was presented to the Court at the Visitation of the Archdeacon of Canterbury for pulling down part of the church of Woodchurch and the adjoining schoolhouse. It was alleged that he had 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 was taken 'to his new-built house' at Woodchurch (Woodchurch Farmhouse?).

This church must have been of considerable size – as big as Birchington Church, as the foundations measure from east to west some 86 feet and from north and south about 80 feet. Some of the stones from this old church may be seen at the present day in the farm buildings of Woodchurch farm on the other side of the road, opposite the site of the church of St. Nicholas at Wood.<sup>21</sup>

## **SIR HENRY AND THE CIVIL WAR**

Sir Henry lived during the first Civil War from 1642 but he was too old to take an active part, being nearly 70 years old. There is little doubt that the sympathies of the Crispe family were on the side of the King. It is probably owing to the Crispe's that no nonconformist Minister was appointed to Birchington at this time as in the surrounding Parishes.

Birchington church possesses two very rare historical documents dating from this time. The Vow and Covenant, and The Solemn League and Covenant. Only five copies of these remain in Kent as they were ordered to be burnt in 1661 after the Restoration of Charles II.

Both these documents promising to assist the forces raised by Parliament against the King and not to assist the forces raised by the King, and promising to preserve the Reformed religion in England, were signed by all the men of the Parish including the Crispe's, in the Parish Church.

The Vow and Covenant was signed on two Sundays, July 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> by Sir Henry Crispe, Nicholas Crispe his uncle, Edward Crispe, and Henry Crispe (Bonjour).

The Solemn League and Covenant was signed the following year, again by the men of the Parish and the same four Crispes. Sir Henry Crispe was owner of Stonar and Patron of the living of St. Nicholas Church at Stonar and as such had squabbles with Sandwich over the taking of stones from



Stonar to mend Stonar's highways.<sup>22</sup> Sir Henry died in 1648 and his burial is entered in the Register of Burials.

The memorial to this Sir Henry Crispe and his father John Crispe is the famous Six Bust monument in the Quex Chapel by the celebrated sculptor, Joshua Marshall, Master Mason to King Charles I. This monument to the two Crispe's, father and son, each with his two wives is unique, as it is the only one in England with six busts.

## **BONJOUR HENRY CRISPE**

On the death of the second Sir Henry Crispe, Quex came by the entail of it to his first cousin, Henry Crispe of Great Chart, the eldest son of Henry Crispe who married Ann, daughter of Thomas Culpeper of Aylesford. Although he succeeded to the estate in 1648 he probably lived at Quex before that date as he signed the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643 in Birchington Church.

In 1650 he became sheriff of the County but because of his age (he was over 70) his son, Nicholas, who also signed the Solemn League and Covenant was permitted to carry out the duties for him. Bonjour Crispe did not take up the Royalist cause openly during the Civil War and Commonwealth period, but he assisted sufficiently to become charged as a 'delinquent' in 1650 and his daughter Ann Darell and Mrs Crispe were listed as Papists.<sup>23</sup>

When Bonjour succeeded to Quex in 1645 there was a reaction in favour of the King, and the Royalists of Kent had obtained possession of Sandwich and Dover. But the reaction was short lived for at Maidstone the Royalist forces were dispersed by Sir Thomas Fairfax and soon all the castles on the east coast of Kent were in possession of Sir Michael Livesey. For helping the Royalists an 'information' (or accusation) was laid against Bonjour Crispe, according to a document in the Public Record Office. It was alleged that he entertained the "pretended Prince, his gardener by his command gave him one hundred pounds". So far we have not found the result of this 'information'.

Bonjour Crispe is best known in the History of Birchington because of his kidnapping in 1657, when 40 armed men on the night of 18<sup>th</sup> July plundered Quex, and forcibly took the old Sir Henry in his own coach to Gore End (Minnis Bay) and carried him by ship to Flanders and held him prisoner at Bruges until a ransom of £3,000 had been paid. The leader of the raiding party was "one who called himself Captain Lendall". Sir Nicholas Crispe the eldest son, petitioned Oliver Cromwell the Protector, to allow the ransom to be paid and so free his father, but Cromwell would not allow it as he thought it was a plot to obtain money for the use of King Charles II who was then in exile. Unfortunately Sir Nicholas died (November 1657) before anything further could be done.

It now appears that Lady Thomasina Crispe, widow of Sir Nicholas took up the case with the Protector and the Council. 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 "Bon-jour" and tradition has it that after this event when meeting parishioners in Birchington he is known in the History of Birchington as "Bonjour" Crispe. Barrett in his History has a detailed account of the events.

"Bonjour" married firstly Maria, daughter of Anthony Culpeper of Bedgebury, Goudhurst, and who died in 1618 aged 34. In Birchington Church

in the Quex Chapel is a fine alabaster monument to the Lady Maria Crispe showing the kneeling figures of Sir Henry (Bonjour) Crispe and his wife with their 4 sons and 1 daughter. Some of the children are holding skulls to denote they predeceased their parents. The authorship of the monument is uncertain but it has some factors which indicate that it may have come from the celebrated Johnson Studio at Southwark. Sir Henry's second wife was Frances Hooper, widow of John Hooper and daughter of Sir Thomas Roberts of Glassenbury. She died 1646. Henry Bonjour Crispe died 1663 and was buried in the Quex Chapel of Birchington Church.

## **CAPTAIN THOMAS CRISPE**

The estate passed to "Bonjour's" nephew, Captain Thomas Crispe of Quekes, the eldest son of Bonjour's brother, Thomas Crispe of Canterbury and of Goudhurst.

In 1662 Thomas Crispe Esquire paid chimney tax or hearth tax for 17 chimneys at Quex and for 6 others on his farm house. No other house in Birchington had that number of chimneys. The next highest number was 12 paid for by John Hayward. **24** The chimney tax was a tax levied in the time of Charles II when "every fire-hearth and stone there in" was charged two shillings yearly.

Mistress Crispe contributed 1s of a total of 7s 3½d collected in Birchington Church towards the **rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral**. The account is duly set out in the Churchwardens' Book and signed by the Churchwardens as follows; "what money hath bin gathered in the Parish of Birchington for Poules Church." Thomas Crispe signed the entry in the same book when a rate at 4d the acre was made for **repairing the Poores' House adjoining the Churchyard** of Birchington. (This was not the Alms Houses we have a photo of in Gas Alley.)

Thomas Crispe married in Holland. He died in 1680 and was buried in the Quex Chapel where a ledger stone with an inscription marks his grave. He was buried in linen, one of only two people in Birchington who were buried in linen after the passing of the Burial in Woollen Act of 1678 which required all persons to be buried in woollen – a means of helping the woollen trade. The Government levied a fairly high tax on wool, so the more it was used, the greater their income – hence the 'Burial in Woollen Act'! The other was Lady Thomasina Crispe, wife of Nicholas Crispe. The penalty paid for this breach of the Act is not stated in the Churchwardens accounts. At a burial an affidavit was required to be made that the Act had been complied with. The penalty for not complying with the Act was five pounds. A number of affidavits were made before Thomas Crispe and certified as "Buried in woollen".

## **JOINT OWNERS**

On the death of Thomas Crispe in 1680 the estate passed to his four daughters who became joint owners. The four were Frances, who married Edwin Wiat of Maidstone, Sergeant of law and Judge of Wales; Elizabeth who married firstly Christopher Clapham of Wakefield, Yorks, and secondly Sir Edmund Andrews, Governor of Virginia; Maria who married Richard Breton of Elmstone, Hafham, Commissioner of Customs; and Anna Gertruy Crispe, who was unmarried up to 1687. Mr Wiat the husband of Frances, paid the sess made by the Churchwardens for the maintenance of the Church, and by the

Overseers for the relief of the poor, but in that year Mr John Ball, gentleman occupied the estate and paid the sess up until 1700.

It was during this period, from 1689 to 1700, that William III, who was also ruler of Holland, on several occasions stayed at Quex when waiting to embark at Margate on his frequent visits to Holland. It was often necessary to wait for favourable winds before sailing and then he would take up residence at Quex Mansion. The Birchington Churchwardens' Accounts show how the people of Birchington welcomed the King by the ringing of the Church bells.

i.e. 1691 gave the ringers when the King landed at Margate 00-07-06

1695 spent when the King landed at Margate 00-07-06

1697 May 28<sup>th</sup> spent on the ringers when the King came to

Quex 00-04-06

In the Kent Records Office there is a letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1691, informing *"their Excellencies, the Lords Justices, that the wind being at S.S.E. His Majesty went on Board his yacht near Margate about two this afternoon, but the wind veering to the Eastward in the evening and there being an appearance of foul weather, His Majesty returned to his place (Quex Park) where he will probably stay until there be a fair wind. His Majesty is lodged at Mr Sergeant Wiat's house in Birchington Parish within 3 miles of Margate."*

Before the old house was pulled down, the room occupied by William III, said to be the bed-chamber of the royal guest, was shown to visitors. The beautiful state chair used by His Majesty can still be seen at Quex. This chair was also used by King George IV at Ramsgate on the occasions of his embarkation to and return from the Continent for Hanover in 1821.

## **SALE OF QUEX**

After holding the estate for twenty years, the joint owners, the four daughters of Thomas Crispe, sold the greater portion of it to John Buller of Morvall, in Cornwall, and a merchant of the City of London. The estate at this date included not only land situated in Birchington, St. Nicholas at Wood, St. Nicholas at Wade, Acol, Woodchurch and Monkton, but also "all that Isle (Aisle) and Building adjoining to the North side of the Parish Church of Birchington aforesaid belonging or appertaining to the said Mansion House of Quex." This, of course refers to the Quex Chapel, which is still a private chapel and still belongs to the owners of the Quex estate. Because it is a private chapel, the owners are not required to obtain a faculty for the erection of memorials etc, therein. The owners of Quex are still responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of this chapel.

John Buller immediately sold 76 of the 611 acres of the estate to Edwin Wiat the husband of Frances Crispe, one of the four heiresses. John Buller held possession of the estate for a very short period, as he died in 1702 and was buried in the Quex Chapel, leaving the life interest of Quex to his son William Buller and his wife Elizabeth.

William Buller, like his father, held possession of Quex for a short period only as he died in 1708 at the age of 34, and was buried in the Quex Chapel where there is a memorial stone to him. His widow, who also had the life interest in Quex, married again very soon and her husband was Francis Wiat, whose mother was one of the joint owners who had sold the estate in 1700.

## SECOND SALE OF QUEX

In 1718 the estate was sold to Sir Robert Furness, son of Sir Henry Furness of Waldershare, subject to the life interest of Mrs Elizabeth Wiat (Late Buller). Mrs Wiat held her life interest for 52 years from 1708 to her death in 1760 and so out-lived Sir Robert Furness (who bought the reversion) by many years.

## THE CRISPE CHARITY

We now need to return to the four co-heiresses, the four daughters of Thomas Crispe who sold the estate in 1700. The unmarried and youngest daughter, Mistress Anna Gertruy Crispe, is so well known in the History of Birchington and it is to her that so many of the young people of Birchington and Acol owe a debt of gratitude. Mistress Anna was the **founder of the Crispe Charity**. She died in 1708 and in her will of 1707, she bequeathed 47 acres ("or thereabouts") of farmland, now known as the Crispe Farm, to the Overseers of the Poor of Birchington and the Vill of Acol. She directed that the income from this should be used to supply wearing apparel for five widows of Birchington and of Acol, to the verger 20s yearly to keep clean the "Isle (Aisle) and monuments belonging to Quex", and the remainder for education.

As a result of this legacy the first Charity School was founded in Birchington and remained in existence for well over 100 years until a little after 1849, when the School in Park Lane, Birchington was built under the auspices of the National Society. However, even after that date, the Crispe Charity contributed generously to the upkeep of the National School until 1876, when it paid most of its surplus revenue from the farm rent to the tiny school in Acol, housed in the newly built little church of St Mildred. When this school closed in c. 1886, the Charity again helped support the National School in Park Lane until it became a Controlled Foundation in more recent years.

It was in the reign of Queen Anne that Charity Schools were founded by hundreds of philanthropists all over England, to educate the children of the poor – 'in reading, writing, moral discipline, and the principles of the Church of England'. They were much needed, because the State did nothing for the education of the poor and most ordinary parishes had no sort of endowed school. So Birchington owes its Charity School to Anna Gertruy Crispe. Under the terms of the Will, boys and girls could be apprenticed to some handicraft trade when they left the school. The first "schoolmaster" was Elenor Jarvis who was paid £6 per year. Gilbert Stringer, who died in 1832, and whose tombstone is at the east end of the Churchyard was master of the Charity School for 33 years.

The scheme regulating the Crispe Charity has been revised on several occasions, in 1862 by the Master of the Rolls, in 1879 by an Order in Council when part of the income was allowed to be used for exhibitions to a higher grade school as well as apprenticing boys and girls. The latest revision was in 1957 when the residue of the nett income could be applied in various ways for the benefit of young persons of either sex who are resident in the Parishes of Birchington or the Vill of Acol.

Grants can now be made to young people for the purchase of tools, books, etc, to assist their entry into a trade or profession and also to societies and clubs catering for young people. The nett income in 1967 was over £200 per year. The rent from the farm in 2013 was £4,420 and the interest from the invested funds added another £433 to the total.

There is a white marble monument with a bust to Anna Gertruy Crispe (based on a likeness of her) in Quex Chapel, and the inscription sets out the terms of the will relating to the Crispe Charity. The monument is by William Palmer, a brilliant and renowned sculptor of this period.

## **RELIEF OF THE POOR OF QUEX**

From early times to quite recently the boundary separating the Parish of Birchington from the Parish of Acol went through the middle of the Mansion of Quex and as a result part of the mansion was in Acol and part in Birchington. This can be seen on the 1840 Tithe Map and also the old Ordnance Survey maps. This was the cause of many disputes as to which Parish was liable if any of the servants living at Quex had to be relieved by the Overseers of the Poor. In the Churchwardens Account Books there are three agreements written out, dated 1711, 1736 and 1788, made between the two Parishes which amicably settled the matter each time. It was agreed that all charges should be paid equally by both Parishes. Occasionally servants at Quex had to be relieved by the Overseers when they grew too old or infirm to work any longer. Nowadays, the employers would usually cover this, especially if they were long term employees, but this was not so in those early days.

## **THE REVERSIONERS**

We now return to the story of the new owners of Quex. When Sir Robert Furness died in 1733 his children and grandchildren became the 'reversioners' and the interest in the Estate passed to them on the death of Mrs Wiat (late Buller) in 1760.

Sir Robert Furness was thrice married, firstly to Ann Balcarn by whom he had a daughter Ann who married Viscount St. John; secondly to the Hon. Arabella Watson by whom he had a son, Henry, who died in 1734 and a daughter, Katherine, who married the Earl Fulford, and thirdly to Lady Ann Shirley by whom he had a daughter, Selina, who married Sir John Dering. So the estate was divided as follows; one third to his daughter Katherine, Countess Fulford; one third to Edward Dering, an infant, the child of his daughter Selina; and one ninth each to the three children of his daughter Anne, Viscountess St. John.

But it appears that Mrs Wiat (late Buller) lived in the Mansion House of Quex until her death, but some time in the 1730's the house was divided into two portions, a Mr Francis Neame being the tenant of one portion.

## **THIRD SALE OF QUEX**

Soon after the death of Mrs Wiat the third sale of Quex took place in 1767, a sale which was permitted by an Act of Parliament to safeguard the rights of the two infant 'reversioners'. The purchaser was Lord Holland, or Henry Fox, the father of Charles James Fox, who afterwards became the eminent Whig statesman. Lord Holland did not reside at Quex, although he may have visited it, but he has left behind him several valuable relics which probably came from Kingsgate, which he also owned. In the gallery at the top of the front stairs of the present mansion is an ancient marble bust, "The Laughing Philosopher". It was given to Lord Holland by Charles Burbury in 1770. By this time the mansion was showing signs of age and decay although the author

John Lewis in his '*History of the Isle of Tenet*' (Thanet) in 1723 says, "it is a large commodious old building, partly of brick and partly of timber."

Bibliothica Topographica Britannica of 1787 says, "This ancient seat, like most others of the same rank, is going fast to ruin; the weather penetrates into most of the apartments, particularly Westward of the porch, which have been the principal ones; the tiles are blown off in many places, the windows demolished, and no part of it inhabited, or indeed fit to be, except a small portion at the end, which is occupied by a farmer. A few years will probably reduce this building to what may be seen eastward of the Porch, as it is in agitation to pull the remainder down; a very fine suite of apartments at the north west corner has been demolished this summer (1781), and as any of the inhabited part of the building may want repair, or purchasers for the materials can be procured, the next will share the same fate."

Different farmers occupied a portion of the mansion at this time from about 1740. Francis Neame resided in a portion of the Quex Mansion and William Neame followed him, and farmed the surrounding land. In 1769 the mansion was advertised in the Kentish Gazette to let.

#### **FOURTH AND LAST SALE OF QUEX**

In 1774 the estate was purchased by John Powell, then Paymaster General to the forces, and from him the estate descended to the present occupiers. There is an oil painting of John Powell in the billiard room of the present mansion. John Powell was a friend of Lord Holland.

On his death in 1783 the estate passed to his sister Elizabeth married to William Roberts. She was also heiress to an estate in Kilburn. At her death in 1788 the estate passed to her husband Wm Roberts. William Roberts held the estate to his death in 1805, when it passed to his second son John Roberts who took his mother's maiden name of Powell and was known as John Powell Powell. The Kilburn estate passed to the eldest son Arthur Annesley Roberts who also took the maiden name of his mother – Powell. There are memorial tablets to Wm Roberts, his wife Elizabeth and the two sons John and Arthur in the Quex Chapel.

#### **JOHN POWELL POWELL**

As many parts of the old mansion were in ruins, the first act of John Powell Powell was to make an agreement with three workmen of Broadstairs to take down the old mansion house, which was completed on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1806, and then make arrangements for the building of a new mansion.

Squire Powell 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 Quex. It is said that the reason for the delay was the drain of workmen from Birchington for the Napoleonic Wars. 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 original 'New Inn' in Birchington Square was changed to that of 'The Powell Arms'. In the new wing of the Powell Cotton Museum at Quex are a number of documents relating to his period of office as Sheriff.

He was Overseer of the Poor for the Parish of Birchington in 1818 when no less than 5 sesses were levied for the relief of the poor, and raising over £1000 in all. His disbursements came to nearly £1000 and of this nearly

£300 was the cost of the victualling, clothing etc of the paupers in the Birchington Workhouse, as well as 39 adults and 35 children who were receiving weekly grants, or out-relief. Because of the high price of bread and the low wages, some large families were given 6d per head per month to help buy bread. A number of unemployed men were set to making wattles, the wattles were then sold and the cost put down in the Poor Book, and another group to picking up stones from fields to repair the roads. 25

Squire Powell was also Surveyor of the Highways or Waywarden for the Parish in 1814 and again in 1821.

When the war against Napoleon was ended for a short time by the Treaty of Paris in 1814, J. P. Powell Esq., subscribed £3 towards the cost of the celebrations, the highest subscription contributed in Birchington.

## **WATERLOO TOWER**

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 therein a peal of bells, but his offer was declined. He had just purchased a pre-Reformation bell from the Parishioners of St. Mildred's Church, Canterbury. This bell is now the hour bell in the turret over the stable clock and it bears the inscription: "IHS have marse (mercy) on the sowles of Thomas Wood and Margret his wife. An. Dni. MCCCCXXXVI". As his offer was declined, tradition says that he built the Waterloo or Bell Tower in Quex Park, so that he could have a complete peal of twelve bells. These were cast by Thomas Mears of Whitechapel. This was the first peal of twelve bells installed in Kent. Canterbury Cathedral, at that time, had only ten bells. The tower is a red brick building with an iron super-structure and a spire forming a land mark for many miles around. It cost about £10,000 and was named Waterloo Tower out of compliment to the Duke of Wellington.

At the grand opening of the peal, two societies of Twelve Bell Ringers of London were invited and rang peals. The Quex Company of Ringers was formed and John Powell Powell employed an expert ringer to work on the estate and to teach other workers on the estate to ring. The Quex Park Society of Charge Ringers still flourishes and some of the ringers ring the bells of the Parish Church of Birchington as well. Hanging in the tower is a Temple bell taken in the First Burmese War by Capt. H. P. Cotton and sent to his uncle 'Squire' Powell as he was known. Also there is the bell from the "Hindustan", an East Indiaman wrecked off Margate in 1803 and salvaged from the wreck in 1845.

## **THE OBSERVATORY or GUN TOWER**

John Powell Powell loved not only bells but also the watching of ships, for which purpose he built the Observatory, or Round Tower, on the north side of the Park in 1814. From here he watched the sailing ships of those days sailing up and down the Estuary, and from his tower he signalled to friends on board. In the Powell Cotton Museum are his telescopes and other instruments.

Surrounding this tower there were several cannon. This private collection of historic cannon gathered together by John Powell Powell was believed to be the largest of its kind in England. Unfortunately, some of these were stolen in c. 2001.

## **THE CLOCK**

In 1848 the same Squire Powell offered to provide a clock for All Saints Church tower, and the Rev. Whish, Minister at that time, also promised £20 towards fixing it. The offer was accepted at a Parish meeting on October 12<sup>th</sup> 1848 and “grateful thanks in a respectful letter” was ordered “to be sent to Mr Powell for his kind gift.”

Three weeks later, however, on November 2<sup>nd</sup> the resolution accepting the gift was rescinded and, curiously enough, included the same persons (both mover and seconder) who had previously voted for its acceptance. The reason given for declining the clock was that the high Parochial Rates at that time “made it imprudent on the part of the Parishioners to accept any gift that would add to the parochial burdens”. 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 the clock. In the Churchwardens Book is written out a copy of Squire Powell’s letter acknowledging the refusal of the gift. The village had to wait another 40 years before it had a public clock.

## **THE BIRCHINGTON WORKHOUSE**

When the Isle of Thanet Union was formed and the Workhouse and Infirmary at Minster was built in 1835, the Birchington Workhouse in Park Lane was no longer needed. The land and buildings were bought by John Powell Powell for £225. **26**

It was John Powell Powell who gave the land in Park Lane to the Vicar and Churchwardens for the building of a school, known, at that time, as the National School. When the school was built Trustees were appointed by the Charity Commissioners. This old School building originally stood on the site of the front car park at the school in Park Lane.

## **JUDGE POWELL**

Squire Powell was a descendant of Judge Powell who in the time of James II was presented with a silver snuff box by the Mayor and Corporation of Gloucester for the interest he took in the release of the seven Bishops from the Tower of London in 1688. This interesting relic, as well as a collection of historical treasures relating to Napoleon, are still preserved at Quex.

John Powell Powell’s wife, Charlotte, died in 1844 and John died in 1849. There is a memorial stone to both in the Quex Chapel.

## **HENRY PERRY COTTON**

On his death the estate passed to his nephew, Henry Perry Cotton of Kingsgate. He was the eldest son of Charles Barland Cotton of Kingsgate, a naval captain in the old East India Company, and Harriet Powell a sister of John Powell Powell whose mother was Elizabeth Powell.

## **HENRY HORACE POWELL COTTON**

On the death of Henry Perry Cotton in 1881 the estate passed to his son Henry Horace Powel Cotton. It was during his time that part of the mansion, now the dining room, was added in 1888. He died in 1894 and his remains now rest in the mausoleum at the foot of the Waterloo Tower in Quex Park, which was consecrated by the Bishop of Wakefield in 1897.



## **PERCY HORACE GORDON COTTON**

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 big game hunter, and founder of the world-wide known Powell-Cotton Museum. He devoted some fifty years of his life to the study and collection of Indian and African fauna, ethnography and kindred interests. Later, members of his family including his wife and daughters continued to collect ethnographical material and contribute in other ways to the museum.

The museum began in a single room in 1896 and was added to in 1901, 1928, 1957 and 1965. Scientists from all parts of the world are attracted to the museum by the fine study series of skins, skulls, and skeletons, the scientific value of which is enhanced by exceptionally careful and detailed field notes. The most recent additions are archaeological remains excavated in the local neighbourhood.

During the First World War, Quex was opened as a hospital for wounded and invalid soldiers, with Mrs Powell Cotton working as its Commandant. During the Second World War, Quex was again prepared and used as a hospital and the Park used by troops, though not as intensively as in WW 1.

Major Powell Cotton, as he was known, died in 1940 and was succeeded by his son Christopher Powell Cotton Esq., C.M.G., M.P.E., M.C., J.P., the next occupier of the estate. Christopher was born in 1918 at Quex Park. At his death in 2006, his nephew from his eldest sister's Diana's family became the figure-head for the family. However, his age and health have kept him at his home in Malvern. One of Diana's granddaughters (Susan Johnson) has now taken up residence in Quex Park, with her husband and two young children. They made the move from their home in Australia in c. 2011 and have added a new dimension to the old house, giving it a great family feeling once more.