

THE CRISPE CHARITY

When the Charity was first founded it was set up with rent from a 47 acre farm in Acol, now known as Crispe Farm. The money was to pay 'an able Dame or Master' to teach 12 children, both boys and girls,(later increased to 24) to read and write, and if possible to 'account'. At the end of their schooling at the age of between 10 and 12, they were to be given a Bible. Those who requested were awarded apprenticeships to a trade, which sometimes bound them to a master until they were 24 years old.

The second part of the will was to provide £1 each to five widows, which was to be used for new clothes, 'that they may appear seemly at Divine Service on Christmas Day'. This was increased during the 1800s to ten widows and in the late 1800s they were given money, rather than clothes. The Charity Commissioners finally agreed early in 2000 to allow the Trustees to increase the grants, which are still handed over just before Christmas.

The third element of the Trust was to pay Ellen Window, the cleaner, to keep Quex Chapel in good order for the family from Quex Park. As the family own the chapel, they still fund its cleaning via Anna's gift today.

The school flourished until 1862, by which time Park Lane National School was providing a more varied schooling for the youth of Birchington. For a brief spell the Trustees paid grants to the school, until, in 1876, a School-Church was built in Acol. For the next ten years they gave their grants to this. When this school closed, they sought the advice of the Charity Commissioners, who drew up the first of several schemes for the funds' management for the benefit of the youth of Birchington & Acol.

From now on the bulk of the funds went to youngsters leaving school and to youth groups in the parish, while the grants to the ten widows and to Quex Chapel continued as before. With the recent additional donation of the funds raised by the sale of the Old Scholars' Club, the Charity looks set for the next 300 years. Thank you Anna for your wonderful gift!